

Dennis Ross heads to Middle East

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross was due to leave Washington late Tuesday for the Middle East for talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the State Department announced. But State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said that contrary to a report by Israeli radio, Mr. Ross would not attend the Euro-Mediterranean conference in Malta that opened Tuesday. The United States "presented some ideas" to the Israelis and the Palestinians "and we need responses," Mr. Burns said.

King congratulates Syria on its national day

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday sent a cable to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad congratulating him on his country's national day. King Hussein wished President Assad continued good health and happiness and the Syrian people further progress and prosperity.

Prince Hassan to deputise for the King

AMMAN (Petra) — While His Majesty King Hussein convalesces from the surgery he underwent in the U.S. on April 5, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan will deputise for him at an 'Eid Al Adha ceremony on Thursday during which he will receive citizens from around the country. A Royal Court statement said Tuesday. According to a government statement, Jordan Armed Forces artillery units will fire guns during the feast marking the end of the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. The guns will be fired at noon, afternoon and evening prayers during the feast days. The Jordan Charity Organisation Tuesday distributed gifts to underprivileged children at nine institutions run by the Ministry of Social Development.

Germany to open probe into Velayati

BONN (AFP) — The federal German prosecutor is to open an investigation into Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati after Tehran was implicated in the murders of Iranian dissidents in Berlin, a newspaper reported. Quoting sources in the prosecutor's office, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper said in its Wednesday edition that the investigation would probably be launched next week. Speaking in Bonn earlier Tuesday, former Iranian President Abul Hassan Bani Sadr called on the German judiciary to bring charges against Velayati and the country's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Last Thursday a German court in Berlin ruled that "the Iranian political leadership is responsible" for the murders of four Iranian Kurds in opposition figures, gunned down in a Berlin restaurant in 1992. The ruling provoked uproar in Tehran and severely strained European Union links with Iran.

Suspected Iraqi consul slain in Baghdad

BEIRUT (AFP) — One of three Iraqi diplomats allegedly implicated in the April 1994 assassination of a dissident in Beirut has himself been killed in Baghdad, the Daily Star newspaper reported on Tuesday. The English-language daily said news of the killing came from the widow of the slain dissident Taleb Soubel, a leading member of the London-based Council for a Free Iraq. Minerva Badreddin Al Souheil, speaking through her lawyer, said the former consul in Beirut, Ali Sultan Darwish, was killed on Saturday, the third anniversary of the dissident's assassination. The killers were not identified.

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Arab-Israeli conflict dominates Euro-Med conference in Malta

Palestinians not to meet Levy, Israelis resist inclusion of 'land-for-peace' in final statement



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa upon meeting at the Euro-Med conference in Malta on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

VALLETTA (AFP) — Arab countries on Tuesday bitterly denounced Israel for derailing the Middle East peace process as acrimonious exchanges threatened to wreck the European Union's (EU) plans to promote greater security and stability throughout the Mediterranean region. "How can we talk about peace and stability in the region when the peace process in the Middle East is stumbling on all its tracks," Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said. His outburst came during a conference of 27 European and Mediterranean countries here that was completely dominated by the current crisis between Israel and the Palestinians.

Despite previous reports that there will be a Palestinian-Israeli meeting at the conference, Mr. Arafat will not meet Mr. Levy during the Euro-Mediterranean conference currently in progress here, a Palestinian delegation member said Tuesday. No other Palestinian official was to meet with Mr. Levy either, the official said.

Mr. Arafat said "Peace and settlements are two opposites," denouncing what he said was an attempt to "Judaize Jerusalem." "The Israeli government continues the policy of collective punishments against our Palestinian people," causing a "deterioration of the economic situation and increases the rate of unemployment to more than 60 per cent of the labour force," Mr. Arafat said.

"We consider that the Israeli settlements are a violation and a great aggression against our people and their right to their nation and to their territory," Mr. Arafat said.

"It will definitely strangle the peace process if this continues," he added. "We are depending on and relying on the effective European role to save the peace process."

Mr. Levy responded by attacking Arab warnings that the peace process was on the verge of collapsing into renewed hostilities as a form of political blackmail.

Instead of "brandishing the weapon of terrorism," Mr. Arafat had to crack down on those involved in acts of terror.

He also called for the Palestinian National Authority "to broadcast, to publicise an unequivocally clear message against terrorism."

Since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took office in June, "we

have worked to promote the peace process by implementing the interim agreements" with the Palestinians, he said.

"All our earlier contributions and efforts were ignored and glossed over," he added.

"Utterances by people who refer to jihad, holy war ... create a climate dangerous for the stability of the region."

Mr. Levy emphasised that nevertheless, "the road towards peace is an irreversible process," and Israel has a "binding obligation" to peace.

Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Mierlo appealed to Arabs and Israel not to let their differences undermine the conference's goal of deepening the fledgling partnership between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours.

"Political tensions in the Middle East do not have to automatically lead to a standstill in the development of this essential partnership," Mr. Van Mierlo said.

Allowing the conference to break up in acrimony could only adversely affect the peace process, he warned.

The appeal came against a background of intense negotiations over the conference's final statement, to be issued on Wednesday.

Arab countries have demanded a tough statement condemning Israel's action on East Jerusalem, which they see as a radical break of the principle of exchanging land for peace which was at the core of the 1995 Oslo peace accords.

Israel was, meanwhile, resisting any inclusion of "land-for-peace" in the conference's final statement. The formula was included in the declaration issued at the first Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona in 1995 but the current Israeli government has distanced itself from it, putting the emphasis instead on security issues.

Arab states had already made it clear before the conference that there could be no significant progress on a Mediterranean security charter designed to increase mutual confidence between the countries of the region, while Israel maintained its current stance. Mr. Musa said Israeli actions had also cast doubt on the development of other areas covered by the partnership. "How can we talk about a dialogue of civilisations and philosophies when we have hands tampering with Jerusalem," he said.

Tarawneh delivers Jordan's address

MALTA (Petra) — Jordan Tuesday asked the European Union (EU) as well as the global community to help salvage the Middle East peace process.

Delivering the Kingdom's address to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Malta, Foreign Minister Fawzi Tarawneh stressed that Jordan rejects all unilateral measures taken in the transitional stage preceding the final status negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel. He said that such measures, especially with regard to Jerusalem where Israel is building Jewish settlements on Arab land, are unacceptable.

The minister said Jordan hopes that the world community will ensure the resumption of the peace process on all tracks in order to guarantee a comprehensive peace that will secure the rights of all parties including the right of the Palestinians to an independent state with Jerusalem its capital.

Dr. Tarawneh highlighted the role that the EU can play in the peace building process, adding that "Europe has indeed become a partner in the process of establishing the foundations of stability, security and development."

He said the EU's continued economic assistance to the countries of the Mediterranean is helping establish political as well as economic stability in the region.

"We in Jordan deeply appreciate the EU's efforts and assistance, and our own efforts at the national, regional and international levels are all concentrated on peace building, which is inspired by the region's countries," Dr. Tarawneh told the audience of foreign ministers from Europe and the Mediterranean.

He added that "we share a common denominator with Europe and we intend to further manifest these endeavours through our expected partnership agreement with the EU."

Last Saturday, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali told the press in Amman that the Cabinet had approved the articles of the draft Jordanian-European Union partnership agreement and that the accord would be signed during the Malta conference.

"As we express our delight over the conclusion of the final draft of the partnership agreement in the past few days, we look forward to a new era marked by close cooperation with the European nations in all fields and based on common principles of respect for democracy, political pluralism and human rights," Dr. Tarawneh said.

The foreign minister added that Jordan hopes that the partnership agreement will create a more balanced relationship (between the parties), help establish a free trade zone and attract investments to the region.

At least 180 Muslim pilgrims killed, 800 injured in Mina fire during Hajj

Combined agency dispatches

AT LEAST 181 people were killed and more than 800 injured in a fire that swept through the tent camps of Muslim pilgrims near Mecca on Tuesday, Saudi officials said.

"The number of dead in the fire, which occurred when a gas cylinder explosion nearby caused a fire that tore through the encampment,"

Reporting from the camp, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi said that all Jordanians at the camp are in excellent condition and that no one was hurt in the fire.

In an interview with Jordan Television (JTV), Dr. Abbadi, who is overseeing the Jordanian pilgrimage groups, said the pilgrims started ascending the Mount Arafat on Tuesday.

He said the pilgrims at the Mina camp were not in any of the official Jordanian groups but had come to make the Hajj on their own.

The government on Tuesday reported that there were no Jordanian casualties among the pilgrims who were camped north of Mina in Saudi Arabia when a gas cylinder explosion nearby caused a fire that tore through the encampment.

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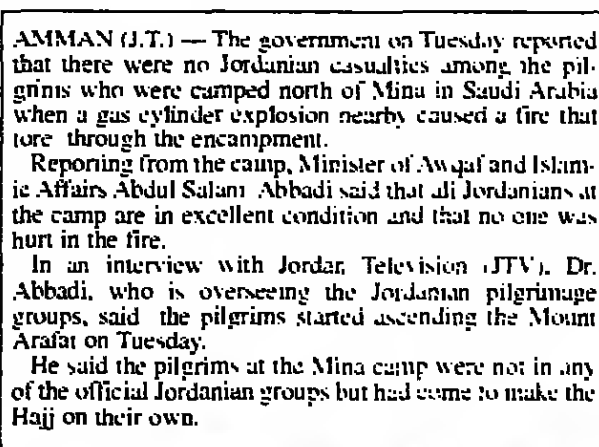
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Picture taken from Saudi television showing pilgrims carrying an injured pilgrim into an ambulance as smoke flares in the background (Reuters photo)

several hours by firefighters backed by emergency helicopters. The temperature in Mecca was 40C.

"The harsh sun and gusty desert wind soon fanned the flames and it spread. Men panicked and ran in every direction," said an Indian pilgrim.

Arif Kamal, Pakistan's consul-general in Jeddah, said that 25 bodies had been found, two of them Pakistanis. Witnesses said they had seen at least 50 dead.

"The nationalities of the rest of the dead has not yet been determined," said Mr. Kamal, speaking by telephone from Mina.

He said that 30,000 Pakistani tents had burned. Clean-up operations were quickly launched, with workers sweeping away the charred remains of hundreds of air conditioners, mattresses and burned pages of the Koran.

Earlier, security forces had thrown up a cordon around Mina, closing off the city to new arrivals at 11 a.m. to prevent further overcrowding.

Egypt's Middle East News Agency said that witnesses reported hearing explosions of gas cylinders.

The tents were pitched close together and were of a flammable material, the witnesses said.

The fire broke out shortly before noon local time. Fanned by heavy winds, it spread quickly but was brought under control after

which are used by the pilgrims for cooking, and suggested this could have been the cause of the fire.

Meanwhile, Iran's official Islamic Republic news agency (IRNA) reported a fire in the Iranian encampments on Mount Arafat, 19 kilometres southwest of Mecca.

It said firefighters had rushed to the scene and were trying to extinguish the blaze. It was not immediately known if there were casualties in the Iranian camp.

Encampments for the Hajj are set up by nationality. The fire at Mina broke out in a section where pilgrims from Southeast Asia are housed. "The fire started in the east of Mina, and spread north, fanned by strong winds," the official Saudi press agency reported. It had no reports on casualties.

Draped in white robes, more than 2 million Muslims from around the world gather Wednesday on Mount Arafat, fulfilling the rites of an annual pilgrimage that is a cornerstone of their faith.

Some 150,000 security forces, guides and boy scouts have been mobilised.

The Hajj attracts the world's largest number of people at any one time, and security is always a priority in the Kingdom. Tension in Saudi Arabia is running high following two bombings since 1995 that claimed the lives of 24 U.S. servicemen.

As always, the Saudis are keeping a close eye on Iranian pilgrims, who insist on holding rallies during the Hajj to denounce Israel and the United States.

In 1987, one such rally led to clashes with Saudi security forces in which 402 pilgrims, mostly Iranians, were killed.

Iran said its pilgrims staged a rally at the Grand Mosque in Mecca Sunday. No violence was reported.

The Hajj has witnessed several tragedies in the past.

In 1994, 270 pilgrims died in a stampede. In 1990, 1,426 people were crushed to death in a tunnel leading to holy sites.

Hospitals have been put on standby with more than 7,250 beds in Mecca prepared to receive patients. Some 20,000 tents were erected to handle other emergency situations at the holy sites.

Saudi Arabian airlines have transported an estimated 600,000 pilgrims from 80 destinations around the world.

Some 5 million leaves of bread were being baked daily at a rate of 7,000 leaves per hour, and 1.5 million blocks of ice were being provided daily to the pilgrims.

Over 207,000 cubic metres of drinking water was offered free of charge. Food for pilgrims is readily available, with more than 3,000 trucks and refrigerated vans roaming the sites.

Pilgrims are expected to spend around \$1.2 billion during the pilgrimage.

Mubarak sends envoy to U.S. to discuss peace

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak sent an envoy to the United States on Tuesday as part of a widespread diplomatic campaign to revive the stalled Middle East peace process. Mr. Mubarak's political adviser, Osama Al Baz, told reporters at Cairo airport he would meet U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, U.S. envoy to the Middle East Dennis Ross and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger. He said his five days of talks would deal with "means to get out of the dilemma the peace process has reached and U.S. ideas in this regard." Mr. Mubarak met Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Cairo on Monday to discuss the latest troubles facing the Middle East peace process.

Human Rights Commission denounces Israel's actions in southern Lebanon

GENEVA (AFP) — The U.N. Human Rights Commission voted massively Tuesday to express its "grave concern" over the actions of Israeli forces in southern Lebanon and west Bekaa, with only the United States opposing the motion.

The motion, passed by 51 of the 53 commission members, denounced the "persistent practices" of the Israeli occupation forces as a "grave violation" of the 1949 Geneva convention on the protection of civilians in time of war.

One commission member, the Dominican Republic, abstained.

The motion deplored "repeated Israeli aggression" in southern Lebanon and west Bekaa, highlighting the large-scale offensive launched in April 1996 which caused "a large number of

deaths and injuries among civilians (and) displaced thousands of families."

The "Grapes of Wrath" operation of April 18, 1996, involving artillery bombardments on a refugee camp at Qana, left 105 people dead.

The commission also deplored "the abduction and arbitrary detention of civilians, the destruction of their dwellings, the confiscation of their property, their expulsion from their land, the bombardment of peaceful villages and civilian areas," and called on Israel to "put an immediate end to such practices."

The motion expressed the hope that "the peace negotiations will continue with a view to reaching a settlement of the Middle East conflict and achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region."

Israeli soldiers raid PNA security offices in W. Bank

BIDDIYA (AFP) — The Israeli army tried to raid two Palestinian security force offices in the West Bank on Tuesday, insisting the army has sole control of security in the area. Palestinian officials said.

Soldiers tried to force their way into one of the offices of Palestinian preventive security chief for the west bank, Colonel Jibni Rajoub, in the village of Biddiyya near the self-rule city of Nablus, said a Palestinian commander.

But they were stopped by Palestinian forces and after an argument left the premises, said Fayed Mustafa, head of Palestinian security in the area.

"This is a barbaric act," Mr. Mustafa said. "We will not close this office. This is a Palestinian area and the security is in our hands."

The Israeli troops also tried to raid Col. Rajoub's office in the village of Habla a few dozen kilometres west of Biddiyya, but found it closed. Mr.

Mustafa said.

Israel Radio and the army planned to close the two offices but the army would not immediately comment on the raids.

Israel maintains the area is labelled "B" under peace accords, meaning the army controls security while the Palestinians oversee civilian affairs.

The Palestinians insist security in the area is the responsibility of both sides.

According to the Palestinians, many such offices exist throughout the West Bank in areas that are not under exclusive control of the Israeli army.

In implementing the Oslo peace process begun in 1993, Israel has withdrawn from most of the Gaza Strip and eight towns in the West Bank, as well as some rural West Bank areas.

The Palestinians have exclusive control of security in most of Gaza and the eight West Bank towns.

Carter to negotiate peace in Sudan Khartoum to sign accord with southern rebel groups

Combined agency
dispatches

FORMER U.S. President Jimmy Carter is resuming efforts to negotiate a peace accord between Sudan's embattled Islamic government and rebels who control much of the south.

"He will try to be helpful in solving the Sudanese conflict," said a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "This is part of his efforts to resolve the crisis."

For the first time since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan is facing the real possibility of secession by its impoverished southern provinces, as rebels advance towards the regional capital of Juba.

Efforts by Sudan's Islamic government, which is being accused by the U.S. of supporting terrorism — to inflict a military defeat on the Christian and animist south have been unsuccessful.

Two years ago, Mr. Carter succeeded in negotiating a brief cease-fire between the two sides.

He is planning to travel to the region again on Friday, accompanied by his wife

Rosalynn and a staff aide, the U.S. official said.

Mr. Carter will first visit Khartoum to meet with Sudanese president, Lt. Gen. Omar Al Bashir, and will then proceed south for talks with chief rebel leader John Garang.

In Cairo meanwhile, a Sudanese minister said Sudan will sign a peace agreement on April 21 with two small southern rebel groups.

Salaheddin Mohammad Ahmad Karrar said the peace accord would introduce a four-year ceasefire to be followed by a referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan.

He said southerners would be given the choice of "staying in a union with the (Muslim and Arab) north or seceding from it."

Mr. Karrar was speaking on his way back from a visit to South Africa.

On April 6, Sudanese Islamic leader Hassan Tourabi announced the forthcoming signature of a peace accord with the southern Sudan Independence Movement led by Riek Machar and with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement head-

ed by Kerbino Kuanyen.

Both these groups are dissident offshoots of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of Colonel John Garang which is not concerned by the peace accord and which is engaged in an offensive against government troops.

'Reshuffle after Eid'

In Khartoum, a press report issued Tuesday said President Bashir will reshuffle his government after the Eid Al Adha holiday.

The independent Alwan daily said Gen. Bashir will promulgate a decree on a reshuffle in the federal cabinet, combining several ministries and naming some new ministers.

The planned changes reported by the paper, which is close to the government, are apparently to be made in light of a peace accord to be signed between the government and the four rebel factions.

The reshuffle is likely to come after the Eid holiday, which lasts for three days from Thursday.

Gen. Bashir will also appoint 15 members of a 25-

member coordinating council for southern Sudan which will include the walis (governors) of the 10 states in that part of Africa's largest nation.

The formation of the council is provided for in the peace agreement. It will run south Sudan during a four-year interim period, to be followed by a referendum among the southern Sudanese on the separation of their territory from the rest of the country.

Government officials have said they are sure that the outcome of the referendum will be a vote for unity.

The secretary general of Khartoum's Supreme Council for Peace, Mohammad Al Amin Khalifa, last week said this would be the choice of members of the 10 state governments affected, followers of the four rebel factions due to sign the accord and more than two million displaced southerners estimated to be living in the north.

The total population of south Sudan is estimated at about seven million, this figure including displaced people and refugees in neighbouring countries.



An Israeli soldier on Tuesday stands guard at the Israeli side of the Gaza-Egyptian border. The Israeli army said Tuesday it has found tunnels between the Gaza Strip and Egypt for the movement of wanted Palestinians and arms. The tunnels were to be destroyed by the Israeli army on Tuesday (AFP photo)

Israel to destroy tunnels between Gaza and Egypt

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli security sources said on Tuesday that Israel had found tunnels linking the Palestinian-ruled Gaza Strip with Egypt and planned to destroy at least one of them later in the day. Under interim peace deals with the Palestinians, Israel has retained control of international borders.

"There are several tunnels... and the army plans to destroy them, starting with one later today," one Israeli security source said without giving any details.

But a senior Palestinian police officer said Israel may be planning to destroy a tunnel that had already been blocked from both ends by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Egypt.

Major-General Abdul Razek Majaydeh, director-general of the Palestinian security forces, said Israel may have made an opening in the tunnel while paving a road between two security fences along the border. Gen. Majaydeh said smugglers used tunnels before the PNA took charge of most of the strip from Israel in 1994. But since then, the PNA did not allow tunnels to be opened.

Islamists, mafia squeeze Christians in south Egypt

By Richard Engel
Reuters

ABU QURQAS, Egypt — Amgad, a Christian from a village in middle Egypt, has been in hiding in Cairo for more than a year, another victim of a protection racket that is tearing apart the social fabric of his birthplace.

What did the trick for Amgad was the third threatening letter from Gama'a Al Islamiya (the Islamic Group), Egypt's largest Islamist militant organisation.

"We demand 10,000 pounds (\$3,000) from you tomorrow. We will not accept one piastre less and if you bring the money a day late it will be 15,000. If you can't bring it within these days... you know the punishment for that," the letter said.

The radicals, starved of funds for their campaign of violence against the government, had picked on him as a source of finance on the pretext that Egypt's Christians should all be paying gizya, the ancient Islamic tax on non-Muslim subjects.

Gizya, abolished by the government at least 100 years ago, has come back in a virulent form indistinguishable from the extortion money collected by mafias all over the world.

"They (the radical Islamists) take whatever they need. When they need weapons they take money from the Christians," said Samir, who declined to be named in full

for fear for his safety.

Samir, who continues to live in a village close to Amgad's, is the victim of a secondary and possibly more pervasive form of the same phenomenon — extortion by a local Muslim mafia-style boss who may have picked up the practice from the Gama'a.

"Everyone pays, everyone. But what can we do?... I am scared I will be killed. Even if I was killed, no one would say anything, even a witness," he said.

Copts say police do nothing

Some of them have been killed and Copts say the police are doing nothing about it.

"We only know the people killed. We never know the people who are paying because if they tell they are dead. A doctor was killed recently because he refused to pay. We didn't know he had been paying," said Talaat Hamed, a doctor from Abu Qurqas.

"Many Copts are afraid of informing the police and I doubt the police officers are interested in stopping them because their inner feeling is 'Let the Copts pay,'" said Rifaat said, a Muslim member of parliament from the leftist Tagammu Party.

The practice appears to be confined mainly to the central provinces of Minya and Assiut, where the proportion of Copts is

especially high where the Gama'a is most active in fighting the government.

In the Bishopric of Qusiya, a Nile Valley town 300 kilometres south of Cairo, the gizya racket has become routine for many of the 100,000 Coptic residents, says Bishop Thomas.

The bishop, who has kept track of more than 100 villagers forced to pay, suggested that extortion by local bosses was now more pervasive than that by the radical Islamists.

"He (the boss) sends a message to send an amount of money. They don't need secret letters. He will pass by (a Christian's) house or shop and say 'you send me 1,000 pounds (\$300)... They are mafia bosses and it is well-known that only Christians are paying,'" the bishop said.

Suspected militants kill Christians

Milad Hanna, a prominent Coptic intellectual and campaigner for good relations between Copts and Muslims, said he thought the practice was more dangerous in the long-term than the occasional massacres of Christians by suspected militants.

There have been two such massacres this year — one of 10 young Copts in a church near Abu Qurqas and one of 13 people, eight of them

Copts, in a rampage through the streets of a village near the southern town of Nag Hammadi.

"The phenomenon of gizya... is the true fundamentalism. The wicked and filthy incidents (of extortion) mean that there is no government in Egypt. It means we are living in a fundamentalist state like Iran or Saudi Arabia," said Mr. Hanna.

"I accuse the (ruling) National Democratic Party... because for the last 20 years they have excluded the Copts from political life," he added.

Mr. Hanna said the gravity lay in the damage the practice could do to relations between the two communities and the demographic change it would bring about as Copts left the area.

"It is a system that has destroyed development," added Bishop Thomas. The Copts, he said, had to pay gizya on every business transaction, even when they harvested or returned from abroad.

Samir tried to do business instead in the Nile Delta, away from the clutches of his mafia boss. But the boss followed him.

"I am very sad because a lot of people are leaving because the situation is not sound," he said.

"This is hell but I don't pay," said a Coptic pharmacist in Qusiya. He said he would love to leave but could not afford it.

British seal off Cyprus base after protest

NICOSIA (R) — British military authorities in Cyprus sealed off one of their bases on Tuesday to prevent a repetition of clashes triggered when Greek Cypriots stormed a military police compound and freed two detainees.

"We are restricting entry to the (Episkopi) base with vehicle control points," Sean Tully, a spokesman for the British bases on the Mediterranean holiday island, told Reuters. The base was quiet.

Episkopi base lies on either side of a main road between the southern coastal port town of Limassol and the western coastal resort of Paphos.

"We will allow access to people who have rights of entry or lawful reasons. These measures are not punitive, they are preventative," Mr. Tully said.

Fifty British soldiers were sworn in as special constables on Monday night when more disturbances were threatened, hours after scuffles broke out between base police and Cypriots demanding the release of detainees.

Cypriots said they were attacked with batons. British military officials said the force used was the minimum needed to contain the crowd.

Five Greek Cypriots were charged on Tuesday with causing a public disturbance and unlawful assembly and released. Another two were still in detention.

The trouble started when base police detained a

Greek Cypriot early on Monday on charges of building illegally at Triakochi, a village within British bases territory close to Episkopi.

Britain has held two military bases in Cyprus since independence in 1960. It enjoys sovereign rights on both, but Cypriots are increasingly questioning the arrangement.

It was the second protest in a month. In March demonstrators pelted a British police compound at Dhekelia, in the island's southeast, demanding the release of a teenager held for traffic violations. The teenager was granted clemency and released a few days later.

Lebanese university teachers on one-day strike

BEIRUT (R) — Some 1,600 lecturers at state-run Lebanese University went on strike on Tuesday for the fifth time this year, saying the government was ignoring their long-standing demands.

Head of the Executive Committee of the University Teachers' Association, Issam Khalife, told Reuters about 35,000 schoolteachers also were expected to strike to express solidarity with university lecturers.

"School teachers said they would go on strike. According to initial information, they did," Dr. Khalife said.

The demands include full independence of the university, full tenure for contract staff and a new pay scale.

"The government has been ignoring our demands. This is why we staged a new strike," Dr. Khalife added.

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14:05Flintstones
14:30 Cartoon — Adventures of the Rainbow Pond
15:00French Programmes
16:00America's Funniest People
16:25Escape from Jupiter
16:50Doc — Challenge
17:15Border Town
18:00French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — Grace Under Fire
20:00Children's Diary
20:30Challenges
21:10 Drama — Spencer for Hire
22:00News in English
22:25Cobra
23:00Hart to Hart

PRAYER TIMES

04:41Fajr
06:02(Sunrise)Dhuha
12:35Dhuhr
16:12Asr
19:09Maghreb
20:30Isha

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Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with skies partly cloudy to sunny and winds northerly moderate. In Agaba, it will be warm, winds northerly moderate and seas calm.
Amman07/17
Agaba13/27
Deserts10/24
Jordan Valley06/20
Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 15, Agaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 66 per cent. Agaba 45 per cent.
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
Dr. Yousef Rashid896301
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab758848
Dr. Khalid Jall740740
Dr. Walid Al Masri675485
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy890280
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Naioukh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir276852
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halaseh982799
Khalifeh pharmacy985417
EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department

630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
Ajaleh Maternity, 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Mubajrees 777101/3
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602340/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272735
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08

(52700) or 08(53250).
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
08:30Agaba (RJ)
09:00Jeddah (RJ)
09:15Lamaca, Damascus (RJ)
09:50Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
15:40New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:40Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:00Paris (RJ)
18:45Brussels, Vienna (RJ)
19:10London, Berlin (RJ)
19:20Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:25Frankfurt, Istanbul (RJ)
20:30Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
20:45Rome (RJ)
21:10Frankfurt, Agaba (add) (RJ)
23:10Beirut (RJ)
01:10Jeddah (RJ)
02:10Cairo (add) (RJ)
04:55Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights
08:15Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
10:30Cairo (MS)
11:00Sanaa, Hudaidah (IY)
12:00Jeddah (SV)
12:55Bucharest (RO)
13:10Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30Tunis (TU)
16:20Algiers (AH)
17:00Doha (Q7)
19:00London (GA)

19:30Istanbul, Damascus (PK)
20:40London (BA)
21:10Beirut (ME)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:30Tel Aviv (LY)
23:20Istanbul (TL)
23:25Amsterdam (KL)
23:30Athens (OA)
05:15Ankara (TK)

DEPARTURES

06:00Agaba (RJ)
07:15Agaba, Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
11:00Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00Istanbul, Rome (RJ)
11:45Berlin, London (RJ)
18:15Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
20:20Colombo (RJ)
20:35Beirut (RJ)
21:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:10Cairo (RJ)
21:15New Delhi (RJ)
21:45Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:50Bombay (RJ)
22:05Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:30Cairo (add) (RJ)
23:40Sanaa (RJ)
Other Flights
08:45Lamaca (CY)
09:25Beirut (ME)
09:25London (BA)
10:00Damascus, Istanbul (PK)
11:20Cairo (MS)
12:40Hudaidah, Sanaa (IY)
13:30Jeddah (SV)
14:00Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:30Tunis (TV)
15:50Vienna (OS)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple700/500
Banana600/600
Banana (imported)950/700
Cabbage130/70
Carrot200/150
Cauliflower180/100
Cucumber (large)250/130
Cucumber (small)400/220
Eggplant200/120
Fava beans350/200
Garlic (Green)350/250
Grape fruit230/160
Lemon670/400
Marrow (large)250/120
Marrow (small)400/250
Onion (green)230/130
Onion (dry)400/200
Orange500/350
Peas550/350
Pepper (hot)570/400
Pepper (sweet)650/400
Potato430/200
Spinach240/150
String beans750/450
Tomato310/140

Crown Prince visits RSS on the occasion of its 27th year

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday offered congratulations to the staff of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) on the occasion of its 27th anniversary and urged its increased efforts in the field of scientific research in order to contribute to a better future.

In a ceremony held at the RSS, Prince Hassan called on the society to continue personnel training and intensify coordination with the different sectors in ensuring the most appropriate utilisation of energy and available resources.

He specified the need for scientific research in order to benefit local industry and called for cooperation with other Arab nations and particularly the Palestinians.

Unless Jordanian scientific research institutions develop themselves Jordan will remain dependent on foreign sources, the Prince admonished.

He described scientific work as facilitating sustainable development.

Prince Hassan toured the Building Research Centre, the Environmental Research Centre and the Electronic Services and Training Centre of the RSS.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday tours various RSS departments on the occasion of its 27th anniversary. Prince Hassan described scientific work as facilitating sustainable development. (Petra photo)

He was accompanied by Acting RSS President Saeed Alloush and other officials.

Also Tuesday, the Crown Prince visited AL al Bayt University where he met with faculty and students. Among topics discussed, Prince Hassan highlighted Jordan's significant effort along with other Arab and Islamic states in pushing for adoption of a resolution

that would condemn discriminatory policies directed at Muslims at a global parliamentary meeting.

The Crown Prince was referring to the meeting of the International Parliamentary Union which convened in Seoul, South Korea this week at which the participants adopted a resolution criticising the Israeli government's recent settlement plans as

"illegal" and a "major obstacle to peace."

Prince Hassan also discussed the value of Islamic scholarship and its contributions to interfaith dialogue. He said that such dialogue contributes to tolerance and works as a strong deterrent to Islamophobia.

AL al Bayt University President Adnan Bakhit accompanied the Prince on his visit to the campus.

Prime Minister briefs Cabinet on meetings with Senate, Lower House

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Tuesday briefed the Cabinet regarding his meetings with the Senate and the Lower House over the past two days.

During these meetings, the premier spoke of the upcoming general elections and heard views in regards to a projected election law.

In his meeting with the House of Representatives, Dr Majali described the government as exploring all possibilities and studying proposals regarding the form a future election law will take.

The election law was introduced in 1986 and subsequently amended in both 1989 and in 1993, when the

one-person, one-vote system was introduced.

Dr Majali requested that ministers coordinate with the Ministry of State for Information Affairs before announcing ministry activities or information pertaining therewith.

During the meeting, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Saleh Horani detailed prospecting agreements which the ministry has heretofore signed with oil companies.

Mr. Horani also reported on the status of the former Jordan Electricity Authority following its transformation into the Jordan Electricity Company.

Minister of State for

Information Affairs Samir Mutaweh outlined arrangements for the installation of a national guidance board for official media services.

At the time of its mandate, the former government of Abdul Karim Kabariti had said that the board, to comprise representatives of the public and private sectors, would supervise the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, thereby assuming the present role of the Ministry of State for Information Affairs.

The Cabinet approved Jordanian participation in the general conference of the Arab Cities Organisation, to be held in Tunis in late May, and named Minis-

ter of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Khrishan to head the Jordanian delegation to the meeting.

The ministers also stipulated that Jordan participate in the Arab Cultural Festival, also to be held in May in Vienna, as well as in a London conference on customs to be organised in September.

The Cabinet also formed Jordan's delegation to an Arab ministers of agriculture conference, organised by the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development, to be held in Cairo on April 24.

That delegation is to be headed by Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khrishan.

Japanese agency to provide funding for integrated family planning project

AMMAN (J.T.) — Representatives of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the National Population Commission (NPC) Tuesday signed a technical cooperation agreement to jointly implement a project entitled, "Integrated Family Planning and Women in Development in Jordan," a Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) statement said.

The three-year project will be implemented in the Ghor al Safi area in Karak Governorate by NPC, the Ministry of Health and QAF and will be funded by the Japanese agency, according to the statement.

The project aims to promote family planning activities, and the quality of life in targeted local communities through enhancing awareness, providing information and training, as well as small income-generating projects.

The agreement was



Representatives of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the National Population Commission (NPC) Tuesday sign a technical cooperation agreement to jointly implement a project entitled, "Integrated Family Planning and Women in Development in Jordan." (Petra photo)

signed at QAF headquarters by JICA visiting team leader Dr. Tokiko

Sato, NPC Director General Nabih Salamah, and Dr. Osama Badran, direc-

tor of the Maternal and Child Health Division at the Ministry of Health.

Prince Ali visits Sahab Industrial City

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Ali Ben Al Hussein Tuesday visited Sahab Industrial City, where Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation (JIEC) Director General Assem Hindawi briefed him on the corporation's role in supporting industrial development and creating a suitable investment climate.

Mr. Hindawi reviewed corporation plans to build industrial estates in various regions of the Kingdom, including Aqaba, Karak, Maan and Tafleh.

He also detailed the corporation's role in linking industry with science and research centres, through concluding cooperation agreements with Jordanian universities and institutes.

Prince Ali praised the role JIEC plays in attracting investments and supporting the national economy.

The Prince toured four industrial plants, including the Middle East Electronics Complex, Al Ram Pharma-



HRH Prince Ali Ben Al Hussein Tuesday visits Sahab Industrial City to discuss the national economy and contributions the industries make therein. (Petra photo)

ceutical Industries Company, Riyadh Chemical Detergents Factory and the Middle East Canning Industry. He inspected worker con-

ditions and was informed of these companies' future plans.

The director general of the Middle East Electronics

Complex briefed Prince Ali on future plans to assemble cars in Jordan in cooperation with a Korean company.

Kuwaiti official foresees ample tourism to Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Kuwait in Jordan Faisal Mukhaizem Tuesday anticipated a large number of Kuwaitis visiting Jordan during the summer, stating that visits by Kuwaiti tourists have increased over the past few years.

During a meeting with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Aqel Bitaji, the diplomat stated that Kuwaitis are linked by societal and familial ties to the Jordanians, which, he said, encourages their journeys to the Kingdom.

Jordan attracts tourists of all kinds, provides excellent accommodation and other facilities for Kuwaiti families on vacation, Mr. Mukhaizem stated.

He affirmed that Kuwaitis who have previ-

ously visited the Kingdom were impressed by the hospitality accorded them as well as excellent service which, he said, encourages them to spend their vacation here.

Mr. Mukhaizem cited the annual Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts as a main attraction in Jordan.

He described his country as eager to further cooperate with Jordan in the field of tourism.

Jordan is keen on providing facilities for families from the Gulf, Mr. Bitaji affirmed. The Kingdom offers various hotels and short-term apartments for vacationing families both in urban areas and at a number of tourist sites, he concluded.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

*"Black Beauty" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Works by Lebanese plastic artists at Hamourabi Arts Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until April 24.

*Exhibition of frescoes of Jordanian mosaics and Fayum portraits by Dorothy Mango at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858), until May 10.

*Display of products, for adults and children in celebration of Eid al Adha, by Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor al Hussein Foundation (NHF) at the NHF premises, off Wadi Saqra (Tel. 699141/2), until April 16.

*Exhibition by the San Francisco-based Palestinian-American architectural photographer Said Hisham Nuseibeh entitled "The Farthest Mosque," at Darat al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 8. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

*Paintings by Vian Shamounki at the Jordan Plastic Art Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 25 (Tel. 623297).

*Paintings by Yassin Al Mohammadani at the Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 681303), until April 28.

*Paintings by Patricia Chatelein at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 27.

Anani discusses women's rights in lecture

IRBID (Petra) — In a lecture at the Irbid branch of the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU), Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani maintained that Jordanian women enjoy the right to run in general elections and to vote as guaranteed by the Constitution.

They must exercise this right if they wish to attain equal rights, he urged.

"In the next stage of Jordanian democracy, we expect that women will play a greater role in decision-making and involvement in issues which influence society and the economy," Dr. Anani said.

In a lecture entitled "Jordanian women and parliamentary elections: reality and aspirations," Dr. Anani explained that "the more voters [participating], the greater the chance for democracy to take root."

The election process should be facilitated in every way and no obstacle should deter eligible voters, he cautioned.

"We should not allow discrimination of any kind, whether between men, women, whites, blacks, Christians or Muslims," Dr. Anani insisted. "Discrimination sows hatred and discord within the society."

He emphasised that women's involvement in any field has always resulted in greater productivity thereof.

Today's world relies on knowledge and science and does not tolerate gender discrimination in the labour market, he added.

Women should seek to enforce their rights, Dr. Anani declared, and one of these rights is to vote and be elected.

During the session, Samireh Hmoud, head of the Irbid JWU branch, outlined the union's objectives and branch endeavours to raise awareness among women concerning their political and social rights.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal Decrees endorse draft laws

AMMAN (Petra) — Three Royal Decrees were issued Tuesday endorsing several draft laws. The first endorsed the Jordanian Farmers Federation law for 1997, under which farmers can contribute to developing the agricultural sector through studying problems facing this sector and suggesting their resolutions. The second endorsed the revised Islamic Courts Lawyers Law, under which the Chief Islamic Justice will appoint a central committee for Islamic courts for the duration he deems fit. The committee will examine requests for licences to practise proceedings in Islamic courts and will discuss research papers presented by trainee lawyers. The third was issued Tuesday endorsing the AL al Baith University law, the Aqaba Region Authority Law, the regulation on the new administrative organisation of the Ministry of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs as well as others.

Soldiers depart for Bosnia

AMMAN (Petra) — A new group of public security officers and soldiers is slated to depart for Bosnia today to join the United Nations peace keeping forces. In a farewell speech, Acting PSD Director General Maj. Gen. Mohammad Anwar Busoul requested that the group perform their peacekeeping duties in the best manner they know to further enhance Jordan's reputation.

Road accident claims life

AQABA (Petra) — One person was killed and another injured in an accident on a new road for trucks in Aqaba, involving two tank trucks, one transporting vegetable oil, the second empty, according to Director of Aqaba Civil Defence Department Lieutenant Colonel Omar Tarawneh. Lt. Col. Tarawneh maintained that the surviving party was rushed to Princess Haya Hospital in Aqaba and listed in moderate condition. CDD teams in various regions of the Kingdom handled 119 incidents, with 33 injuries and four deaths, three of which were attributed to illness and one to road accidents.

Women receive awards for soccer

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for HRH Prince Abdul-Jah Ben Al Hussein, Dr. Saleh Irshaidat, vice president of the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) Tuesday attended the final women's soccer game, held at the University of Jordan stadium. This game ends the first Women's Football Championship, organised by Al Aswaaq newspaper. Dr. Irshaidat presented medals to Al Aswaaq team which beat Al Bayan school 2-0. Al Aswaaq newspaper representative professed a newspaper trophy to Dr. Irshaidat that he might present it to Prince Abdullah. Alia Tufahh, May Abbadi and Rana Hussein were presented awards for best player, highest scorer and best goalkeeper, respectively.

Correction: In the story covering a projected university in the Aqaba governorate published Monday, the project was referred to as the American University of Jordan when it should have read as The American University of the Jordan, it is to be established in the village of Teeba rather than Taybeh on a plot of 2,000 dunums of land, of which 1,000 dunums will be allotted for the campus, rather than the reported 200 dunums. The Jordan Times regrets the error.

Security clampdown in Kinshasa scuppers opposition demonstration

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire's capital Kinshasa was calm Tuesday as an opposition demonstration calling on President Mobutu Sese Seko to quit failed to materialize by mid-day amid discreet but effective security measures.

Civil guards and gendarmes blocked off the two access roads to the campus housing three university-level schools, which seemed enough to stop students rallying.

Elsewhere in Kinshasa, there was a timid resumption of activity as stores re-opened, but traffic was limited after a stay-at-home opposition strike Monday had succeeded in bringing the capital to a standstill.

Escalating political ferment in the capital would create a dangerous second front for Mr. Mobutu, already beset by the rebellion in the east and under growing pressure to either resign or talk to rebel leaders face to face.

The United States urged Mr. Mobutu and rebel leader Laurent Kabila to meet for talks on reaching a ceasefire, while U.N. chief Kofi Annan and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) gave renewed backing to widespread calls for an end to the fighting and the formation of a broad, democratic government.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the talks in South Africa, which broke off at junior level last week, were the best way of avoiding further bloodshed.

Diplomatic sources in Pretoria said Mr. Kabila was due Tuesday in South Africa, although it was unclear who he was going to meet.

Rebels have since October seized the eastern half of Zaire in a drive to unseat Mr. Mobutu, last week claiming Kananga, capital of western Kasai province, and the south-east town of Kolwezi.

Mr. Mobutu's son Mobutu Nzanga said in a newspaper interview published in Brussels Tuesday that Mr. Mobutu would not flee into exile and would stay in Kinshasa to stop the capital falling into rebel hands.

Information Minister Kin Kiy Mulumba had warned late Monday that a state of emergency Mr. Mobutu declared on April 8 would be enforced "in all its rigor, and without waiting."

In Kinshasa there was a normal bustle of people on the streets, especially in the open-air markets. Most people in the city cannot afford to go two days without working.

The opposition loyal to former Premier Etienne Tshisekedi had called for students to demonstrate, using cars as much as possible — taking them from their owners if necessary.

The risk of losing their cars kept many motorists off the streets and there was little traffic.

Over the weekend, the opposition distributed leaflets that said: "Mobutu has betrayed the people. He continues to destroy the country. Let us unite to drive him out."

Gendarmes were posted in small groups at strategic sites across Kinshasa.

An incident in Matete district, a militant Tshisekedi district in eastern Kinshasa, revealed the effectiveness of security forces.

Pro-Tshisekedi protesters had put a barricade blocking the main boulevard in the neighborhood, but gendarmes and civil guards arrived quickly to clear it, and made a few arrests.

It was such quick action which kept demonstrations from growing Monday and seemed to be working Tuesday, in addition to blocking off the campus area.

Pro-Tshisekedi demonstrations last Wednesday were brutally suppressed, the day after the state of emergency was decreed by Mr. Mobutu.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan Monday called on members of the United Nations to press Mr. Kabila into calling a ceasefire and accepting a negotiated solution to Zaire's crisis.

Mr. Annan said in Rome it was clear Zaire was on the brink of major political change and would require the support of the entire international community.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kabila triumphantly entered Zaire's second city Lubumbashi Monday, while security forces loyal to President Mobutu Sese Seko opened fire in Kinshasa to disperse protesters as an opposition stay-at-home strike brought the capital to a standstill.

Supporters of Mr. Kabila danced, cheered and flashed V for victory as Mr. Kabila drove from Lubumbashi airport into the city proper, which was captured by his guerrillas last week after a three-day battle with government forces.

Mineral-rich Shaba province is Mr. Kabila's home region and its population is broadly favourable to the rebel leader. Kabila flew in from Goma, the Zairean town on the border with Rwanda that has been headquarters of his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

Mr. Kabila — wearing his now-familiar cow-boy hat and looking relaxed — made no statement upon arrival, but he expected to speak at a public meeting Tuesday in the city centre, after spending Monday night in a former residence of Mr. Mobutu's in Lubumbashi.



A military helicopter hovers overhead as thousands of supporters of ousted Indonesian minority party leader Megawati Sukarnoputri staged a protest outside the national parliament in Jakarta Tuesday. The demonstration was a show of strength ahead of the May 29 general elections, from which Megawati has been barred (Reuters photo)

Thousands of pro-Megawati supporters rally at parliament

JAKARTA (AFP) — More than 5,000 supporters of opposition figure Megawati Sukarnoputri rallied Tuesday at the Indonesian parliament demanding to know if her opposition faction will be allowed to stand in next month's general elections.

The demonstrators, most wearing the Indonesian Democracy Party's (PDI) red and black colors and pictures of Ms. Megawati on their shirts, were barred from entering the parliamentary compound by hundreds of riot police on guard at the main gate.

Ten army helicopters hovered over the demonstration, one of the largest in recent times outside the parliament.

The rowdy crowd, yelling pro-Megawati slogans, blocked two of the three traffic lanes in front of the parliament, causing mass traffic jams on the capital's nearby main arteries, correspondents reported.

Other supporters were still arriving in separate groups, the correspondent reported from the scene Tuesday.

There was no report of violence or clashes with the police, who limited themselves to guarding the area and directing the traffic.

Popular Megawati was ousted as PDI leader in June 1996 by a government-backed party faction, who then installed Mr. Suryadi as the new party leader.

Mr. Megawati is the daughter of Indonesia's founding president, Sukarno.

"These people came here to ask MPs about the status of PDI (the Indonesian Democracy Party) in the elections," Ms. Megawati loyalist Tarto Sudiro said.

Mr. Suryadi's leadership has been facing increasing pressure from Ms. Megawati supporters nationwide.

"We want to know whether Ms. Megawati can take part in the elections, we want an explanation," one of the many demonstrators said.

"If Megawati cannot take part, then the election is both democratically and legally flawed," Mr. Sudiro said.

He said the demonstrators, from various towns in Java and Sumatra, were seeking the parliament's help in expressing to the government "the concerns they currently

felt regarding their representatives in the elections."

Ms. Megawati, whose party chairmanship is no longer recognized by the state, has been effectively barred from running in the May 29 elections after the national elections institute refused her faction's list of election candidates.

The institute however, accepted Mr. Suryadi's list which did not contain Ms. Megawati's name or those of her supporters. "We are the victims of July 27 and we will persist in bringing Mr. Suryadi to justice," one of the banners held by the demonstrators showed.

On July 27, supporters of Mr. Suryadi, backed by police and troops, violently took over the PDI headquarters where which was then still in the hands of Ms. Megawati loyalists.

A mass riot ensued later on the same day in central Jakarta that left five people dead and more than 100 injured.

Ms. Megawati and her allies have since filed suits against what they have termed illegal moves to unseat her as the chairman elected by the party's Congress in 1993.

Her supporters in various regions have also filed suits against Mr. Suryadi's supporters for attending a rebel congress held in Medan, north Sumatra in July.

Courts here and in other towns however, have all said they had no jurisdiction to rule on "internal party matters," and have declined to process the suits.

Indonesia will start its 27-day electoral campaign election on April 27, ahead of voting on May 29, after a five day "rest period."

The country's three state-recognized parties — the ruling —, the Muslim-led United Development Party (PPP) and the PDI — will vie for the 425 elected parliamentary seats.

Another 75 seats will be directly allotted by presidential appointment to members of the armed forces, which under the law do not vote in elections.

Golkar has won every election since 1971, and the vote is taking place amid a backdrop of criticism that is trying influence the outcome.

Serbs in Croatia complete 'fair' vote

ZAGREB (R) — Former rebel Serbs have completed their first election in post-independence Croatia, judged by the United Nations to be fair despite technical hitches that almost ruined it.

Voting in eastern Slavonia, which reverts to Croatian rule this summer after a period under U.N. protection, coincided with Sunday's regional elections across Croatia, but was extended into Monday to make up time for technical delays.

The ruling Nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) cruised to a landslide win in 17 of 21 county assemblies.

It lost only two, while there were stalemates between the HDZ and the opposition in two counties previously run by the HDZ, according to a final unofficial count announced Monday.

Organisational bungling that led to misplaced and insufficient ballot forms halted voting in eastern Slavonia for hours Sunday.

The U.N. blamed the delay on poor planning by Croatian electoral authorities supplying voting materials. Zagreb officials put it down to uncertainty over the number of Serb voters, who were still registering as late as Saturday night.

Franc Vassallo, U.N. election coordinator in eastern Slavonia, said there was still no way to estimate how many people had actually voted. Roughly 150,000 were eligible.

U.N. mission spokesman Philip Arnold said the first unofficial results would be released Tuesday.

"On behalf of (U.N. administrator Jacques) Klein, I can say that he is confident the election will be certified as fair and free," Mr. Arnold told a news conference in Vukovar, eastern Slavonia's largest town, still in ruins from a 1991 war.

Mr. Klein, a U.S. diplomat in charge of the mission, has 30 days to formally certify the voting in which a single Serb party bloc was pitted against the HDZ backed by Croatian refugees who are keen to reclaim their property.

Eastern Slavonia is the one remaining enclave seized by minority Serbs in a 1991 revolt against Croatia's secession from Yugoslavia. Two others were recaptured in war in 1995.

In the capital Zagreb, a centre-left opposition coalition appeared to have edged ahead of the HDZ in a popular vote for the city assembly.

The Social Democrats (SDP) — former Communists — finished with 24.18 per cent and Social Liberals (HSL) 12.58 per cent for a combined 36.76 per cent of the vote, while the HDZ gained 35.67 per cent.

Belgian report calls for police overhaul

BRUSSELS (AFP) — A Belgian parliamentary commission into a series of bungled inquiries into missing children will call for a radical overhaul of the country's police force, the press here reported Tuesday.

The report, which the commission is to present to parliament later Tuesday, is widely expected to blame police and the judicial system for mistakes in the hunt for missing children who died at the hands of paedophiles.

Its findings may lead to senior officials in both bodies being punished.

According to leaked extracts published by the daily Le Soir, the report will call for the creation of a two-tier police force organised on local and federal levels.

At present, the police in Belgium has a three-tier structure, comprising the judicial police, the municipal police and the gendarmes.

Since the discovery in August of bodies at houses owned by convicted child rapist Marc Dutroux, the police have been accused of everything from lack of initiative and administrative bungling to downright incompetence.

The commissioners rule out any notion that the investigative slip-ups were simply "bad luck", Le Soir said.

"In different cases, the same situations crop up again, and the same scenarios give rise to the same results," one extract says.

The paper said the report also recommends improved training for examining magistrates who oversee criminal investigations with the aid of police.

A state prosecutor, Benoit Dejeunne, will be singled out for failing to act quickly enough over the disappearance of a nine-year-old Moroccan girl in 1992.

Her body was found last month, just yards from her home, in the garage of another convicted paedophile, Patrick Derobette. He had been interviewed by police, then dropped from enquiries.

"M. Dejeunne does not fulfil the requirements to direct his team," an extract of the report read on Belgian radio said.

"He trusted his subordinates, but did not sufficiently supervise them," it continued.

After a march in Brussels in October attended by some 325,000 people, Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene acknowledged that the system had failed.

"The institutions, the state, have failed," he said, adding: "We must draw the lessons and punish" those responsible.

Mr. Dutroux, who has previous convictions for rape, has been charged with the kidnap and false imprisonment of six girls between June 1995 and August 1996.

He is also accused of the murders of four of them — An Marchal, 17, and Eefje Lambrecks, 19, who were abducted in August 1995; and Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo, both eight.

The bodies of Lambrecks and Marchal were found a year after they vanished in a property owned by Dutroux. Lejeune and Russo, abducted in December 1995, starved to death three months later.

According to preliminary extracts of the report published in the daily La Dernière Heure Monday, police will be also criticised for failing to inform investigators probing the Lejeune and Russo disappearances of suspicions over Dutroux.

The upper echelons of the judicial system are also set for criticism, in particular former Justice Minister Melchior Wathelet who, in 1992 and against expert advice, authorised the early release of Dutroux from a 13-year prison sentence.

U.K. Conservative leader opposes EU currency

LONDON (R) — Conservative Vice-Chairman Angela Rumbold has dealt a blow to her party's fragile truce over Europe in the run-up to the May 1 election, opposing British participation in a European single currency in direct opposition to the party's "wait and see" policy on the issue.

Ms. Rumbold, a leading member of the party hierarchy, firmly joined party dissidents in her election address to voters, saying of the Euro: "I won't vote for it."

"No more powers for Brussels. No to a single currency. Yes to a referendum before any further steps of constitutional importance are taken," she said.

Mr. Major, bidding to give the Conservatives their fifth election victory in a row, has opted for a wait-and-see stance, saying he will decide nearer the time if it makes sense to join and

only after he has consulted the British people.

Conservative officials hoped the line would paper over the cracks with Eurosceptics who oppose Britain conceding any more sovereignty to Brussels.

The Labour Party, opinion poll favourites to win power after 18 years in opposition, has "blocked" Conservative divisions. "John Major is in danger of becoming John Major within his own party," Foreign Affairs spokesman Robin Cook said.

The battle for Britain has turned into a slanging match with political leaders resorting to increasingly bitter personal attacks in the election campaign.

Labour leader Tony Blair, the photogenic centrist dubbed "pobony Tony" by the ruling Conservatives, vowed Sunday to avoid negative campaigning in his bid to end 18 years in opposition for his party.

But he was stung into an angry retort Monday when Mr. Major mocked Mr. Blair's choice of school for his son.

Mr. Major, trailing Mr. Blair by 18 percentage points in the latest poll in the Daily Telegraph Tuesday, said the Labour leader's education manifesto was "a shameful contract with hypocrisy."

Mr. Blair sends one of his sons to a school that has opted out of local authority control — even though Labour was originally opposed to allowing schools to do that.

"What he wants for his own children, he doesn't want for yours. What he has for his children, he wants to take away from yours," Mr. Major said on the campaign trail Monday.

That jibe clearly infuriated Mr. Blair, who said of Conservative attacks: "They are negative. They are nasty. They are personalised."

The Conservatives traditionally bill themselves as fervent patriots. But Labour has sought to upstage them with one of the most potent symbols of tenacity — the British bulldog.

For its first television advertisement campaign, Labour hired Fitz the bulldog, who appears tired and listless until he bears the thrashing young Blair talk about how he has transformed Labour, dumping much of its socialist dogma.

Labour campaign manager Peter Mandelson said: "It is an animal with a strong sense of history and tradition. But like Britain today, it is tired and without direction."

The Conservatives mocked Labour's choice of the bulldog, associated with the wartime spirit of resistance embodied by Conservative Winston Churchill. "It ought to be a poodle," one official snorted derisively.

In other developments Monday, the White House said 56 major Democratic party contributors flew on air force one as guests of Mr. Clinton in 1995 and 1996. It said Vice-President Al Gore gave plane rides to 17 contributors in the same period.

And the Democratic Party released some 10,000 pages of internal documents in what appeared to be an effort in advance damage control. The documents described a master plan to raise \$7 million in 1996 campaign funds from Asian-Americans.

She said the key requirement under the independent counsel law — specific, credible evidence that a covered person has committed a federal crime — has not been met.

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information on a wide range of matters," including items that were previously known only to a "very small group of people."

Mr. McDougal told Mr. Howard he took "full and complete responsibility for my crimes and misdeeds" and said he had "no excuse whatsoever to offer your honour."

Mr. McDougal has been the central figure of the Whitewater investigation since the start and was closer to Mr. Clinton than anyone else brought to trial.

McDougal jailed for 3 years in Whitewater case

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (R) — President Bill Clinton's former partner James McDougal was sentenced to three years in prison Monday after making a deal Mr. McDougal hinted might spell legal trouble for the president and first lady.

Mr. McDougal, 56, could have received a sentence of more than 80 years in prison for his May 1996 conviction on 18 counts of fraud and conspiracy, but got off lightly because of his cooperation with Whitewater independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr.

Mr. McDougal hinted to reporters afterwards he was giving investigators information that could implicate the president and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Whitewater scandal and urged everyone to "stay tuned" to developments.

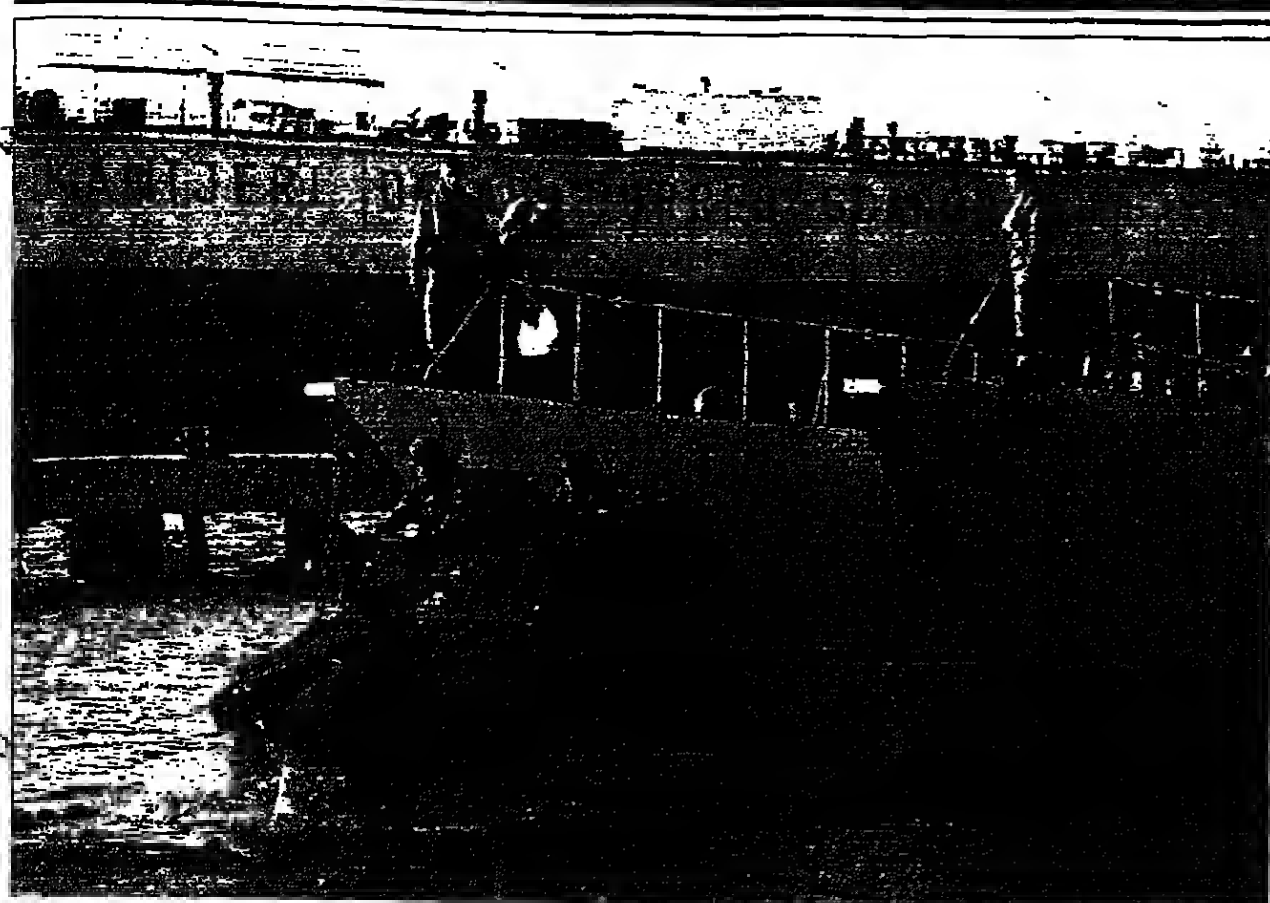
"I wouldn't go to the bank on that," Mr. McDougal said when asked if he believed the Clintons would be exonerated in the scandal, as he maintained during the May trial.

U.S. District Judge

George Howard recommended that Mr. McDougal serve his time in a prison hospital because of a variety of health problems. He also gave him a three-year probation sentence, with the first year to be served under house arrest, and a \$10,000 fine.

Mr. McDougal was set to go to jail on June 16, but he said he would likely appeal the case.

Mr. Starr argued for a light sentence for Mr. McDougal, whom he said was providing investigators



A French military vehicle drives off an amphibious boat from the French transport vessel Orage as it approaches the port of Durres to secure the area Tuesday. The main seaborne landing force of the multinational security mission in Albania began arriving Tuesday in this western port town to protect humanitarian aid convoys in violence-racked Albania (Reuters photo)

Taleban claim capture of key commander in east Afghanistan

KABUL (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taleban forces have captured a key opposition commander following guerrilla strikes against the Islamic militia. Taleban-run radio Shariat reported Tuesday.

The Taleban mouthpiece said Commander Zahir — son of ousted Nangarhar province Governor Haji Abdul Qadeer — was captured 52 kilometres south-east of Jalalabad, Nangarhar's provincial capital.

"Twenty-two elements of the evil and corruption regime were arrested in Aslamkama and Achin districts of Nangarhar province," radio Shariat stated.

"Commander Zahir, son of Haji Qadeer, is among the detainees," it added. Radio independent confirmation of the arrests was available.

It said Com. Zahir and the 21 other captives were fighting for the anti-Taleban alliance which has recently launched a spate of strikes in eastern Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces.

Haji Qadeer and his previously-neutral Jalalabad Ruling Council were pushed out of the province during the Taleban's blitzkrieg-style advance to the Afghan capital Kabul September last year.

The remnants of his forces have reportedly reformed and set up bases close to the Pakistani border, where Commander Zahir was allegedly captured.

Ousted-Kabul government forces, who are now based in the Panjshir Valley 85 kilometres north from here, Monday told AFP Mr. Qadeer's forces were now fully involved in their attacks.

Haji Qadeer was last reported to be in Germany, visiting relatives who run a restaurant. His current whereabouts are not clear.

The 15-member council, forces and the Hong Kong government, and coordination of communications support," the spokesman said.

The group will be led by a deputy commander of the future garrison, an officer of the rank of major general.

A 28-member liaison group led by the deputy commander will be located with British forces at the Prince of Wales barracks in central Hong Kong. The other 12 will be billeted with the British garrison on Stonecutters Island in Hong Kong Harbour.

The PLA troops would wear uniforms within the barracks but civilian clothing outside military sites.

"They have to strictly abide by all Hong Kong laws," the spokesman said in an effort to allay fears among Hong Kong's 6.4 million population that the PLA would put itself above the law.

"The duties of advance personnel are to make practical preparations for the PLA to take over the responsibility for the defence of Hong Kong, including familiarisation with military sites, liaison with British

"They will not be armed and will not enjoy any special legal status or ... privileges and immunities," the spokesman said.

This agreement provides a firm basis for the smooth transfer of defence responsibilities.

Grenade wounds 33 in Addis Ababa

ADDIS ABABA (R) — A hand grenade exploded in a large Addis Ababa supermarket Monday, wounding 33 people in the third such attack in three days, police said.

In a statement, police said the grenade was lobbed Monday into the Tana supermarket in the Ethiopian capital's Merkato main market area. It said all casualties were taken to hospital.

The attack took place at about 5 p.m. (1400 GMT) when the supermarket is usually bustling with shoppers after work.

Police advised the public to be on alert to avoid "terrorist" attacks and said they were searching for the attackers. The supermarket was state-owned until it was sold to a businessman last year.

Following the blast, the supermarket, one of the most modern and largest in Addis Ababa, was cordoned off by police units.

It was the latest in a series of apparently politically motivated bombings in Addis Ababa and provincial cities.

Grenade blasts in an Italian restaurant and a hotel in the capital Saturday killed an Ethiopian waitress and wounded a total of 42 people including four Britons and a French couple.

Diplomats said earlier Monday that a French couple who were wounded in one of the two blasts in Addis Ababa Saturday had been evacuated by plane to Paris for treatment.

Two Britons who were also injured in an attack on the Chic Blue Tops restaurant in the capital were expected to be flown home to Britain for treatment later Monday, doctors said.

The two British men said they were in Ethiopia to train the police and threw themselves at one of the grenades to protect their wives at the restaurant, favoured by foreigners and rich Ethiopians.

A doctor at the Russian-run Balicha Hospital in Addis Ababa said Monday the French woman was injured in one of her eyes and the French man had been wounded by shrapnel in his legs.

Ethiopian police said a waitress died and 33 people were wounded when a grenade was lobbed into the Tigray Hotel near the busy Piazza Area in the city centre, at about the same time.

Diplomats said they had unconfirmed reports of at least two more grenade attacks in Addis Ababa Saturday night but one failed to explode. One of the alleged targets — the Meridien Hotel on Bole Road — was unscathed.

French, Spanish and Italian troops deploy in Albania

DURRES, Albania (AFP) — Operation Alba, the Italian-led mission to aid stricken Albania, got properly underway Tuesday with the first major deployment of troops from France, Spain and Italy.

Numbering over 1,000, the troops who came with light tanks and armoured personnel carriers comprise the first major contingent of the 6,000-strong multinational force which is being sent to the lawless Balkan Republic.

A French naval vessel, the Orage, docked at dawn, lowering its ramp directly onto the dilapidated harbour to allow more than 100 armoured vehicles and nearly 400 troops to drive onto dry land.

An Italian ship also disgorged 260 soldiers and 90 vehicles while a naval ship carrying Spanish troops and equipment waited outside the harbour for their turn.

Gathering to watch the events, small groups of Albanians observed the proceedings from behind the rotten wire fence ringing the port that one month ago was comprehensively looted during unrest.

Overnight a group of 80 French commandos came ashore because of rumours of a possible threat to the deployment, though no problems have been reported thus far, a French officer said.

The force, which could take up to 20 days to deploy fully in Albania, will secure the port and main roads in the country for aid deliveries, the first of which — some 400 tonnes of flour and beans — was also due to arrive Tuesday.

French troops are being tasked to secure Durres for the arrival



An Albanian boy from the port of Durres stands by an Italian tank after it disembarked from the Italian amphibious assault ship San Marco Tuesday (Reuters photo)

of the other forces and to begin fanning out to other towns in the coming days. Italians and Greek troops are due to head south while the Spanish will go to the main northern town, Shkoder.

Turkey's 500-strong contingent will arrive in Albania in 10 days time, the Defence Ministry in Ankara said Tuesday, while Denmark announced later that its contribution to the force would amount to 65 soldiers, Austria and Romania are also due to send troops to join the force.

A second contingent of 600 French troops is due to leave the southern French port of Toulon Wednesday morning to join the units in Albania.

A spokesman for the Italian troops, Colonel Gianfranco Scalas, said his forces would gradually move south over the next 10 days. He said he did not

expect any problems. "Our mission is to solve problems, not create problems," he said.

Primarily in Albania, the force would only provide escorts if requested by the aid agencies, Maj. Gourmelon said. There are no plans to use the forces to disarm the population.

Under U.N. Security Council approval, the force does have the right to use force if attacked. However, Maj. Gourmelon said any use of force would "be proportional."

Col. Scalas added: "We think that we will use our guns only in cases of extreme necessity."

The Albanians have welcomed the arrival of the force hoping that it will increase stability in the country, enabling them to restore law and order and prepare for new elections in June.

Yeltsin to hand back to Germany 'something' of World War II art works

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin will hand back "something" of the art works seized by Soviet troops from Germany, the Kremlin said Tuesday, a move likely to please Bonn but enrage the Russian parliament.

A Kremlin spokesman said Mr. Yeltsin had told the German weekly magazine Stern in an interview that he "will bring something of the objects to Germany" when he visits Wednesday.

There was no indication on how many of the approximately 200,000-300,000 art works — including paintings by Rembrandt, Cezanne and Goya, and the Golden Piam's Treasure, found at the site of ancient Troy — were involved.

Mr. Yeltsin is to meet Chancellor Helmut Kohl Thursday at Baden-Baden and receive the German media's 1996 Man of the Year Prize.

Russia's refusal to return the priceless art works and archive materials has soured otherwise close relations between Moscow and Bonn.

Mr. Yeltsin's plan to hand back "something" of the so-called trophy art fuels his battle with the Communist-dominated Lower House of Parliament, the state Duma, which rejects that Russia is

under any obligation.

On Wednesday the Upper House, the Federation Council, will vote on a law passed in the Duma declaring the art Russian state property. Mr. Yeltsin had already vetoed the law, only to have his veto overturned on April 4.

If the Federation Council again supports the Duma law, Mr. Yeltsin has threatened to go to the constitutional court.

According to Nezavisimaya Gazeta daily, the Kremlin has prepared two decrees for Yeltsin: One to hand back art taken from German national museums, one to return the archives of the East German Communist Party.

The paper said the decrees had been given the green light by the foreign, defence and external intelligence ministries and that Mr. Yeltsin would sign them Tuesday or Wednesday.

The report was denied by government spokesman Igor Shaburassulov. Nezavisimaya Gazeta added, who said that "concerning the art objects there is no such document."

"Mr. Yeltsin has given no order to the government concerning the transfer of works to Germany," he was quoted as saying.

A Kremlin spokesman refused to comment on the report.

Mr. Yeltsin spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky told ITAR-TASS news agency that the Soviet Union had returned 1.9 million art works seized by the Red Army to East Germany between 1955 and 1969.

He said that three million archive materials had been returned by 1965.

Vladimir Semago, a Communist Party deputy, said Mr. Yeltsin would take "nothing valuable. Taking masterpieces would break all the laws and the presidential authority which does not allow him to manage state property."

Anatoly Lukyanov, also a Communist deputy, played down Mr. Yeltsin's promise, saying "he will bring something from the archives. It will not be something important, despite the unpredictability of our president."

The parliament's controversial law declared the art works "compensation for the damage inflicted on the cultural heritage" of the Soviet Union during the war.

In addition to Germany, Russia is negotiating over the return of art works seized from France, Hungary, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands and Poland among other countries.

Russian defends arms sales to China

BEIJING (AFP) — Russian Defence Minister Igor Rodionov defended Tuesday Moscow's arms sales to China, and vowed that Russia would never seek to alter the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, in a speech to the Chinese Academy of Military Science in Beijing, Mr. Rodionov also warned Russia could find itself dragged into any conflict that might break out on the Korean peninsula.

While stressing the importance of Sino-Russian strategic cooperation, Mr. Rodionov admitted some countries were "concerned" over Russian arms sales to China.

"However, I must make it

clear that such technical cooperation is one of the directions that the development of Sino-Russian relations is taking at the inter-government level," Mr. Rodionov said.

In an attempt to alleviate some of the concern, the minister stressed that Russia's arms sales policy was strictly limited by the country's obligations as signatory to international arms control agreements.

He also reaffirmed that Sino-Russian military cooperation was "not aimed at any third country."

Russia has become China's biggest arms supplier since the two patched up their ideological rift in 1989.

Recent agreements have included the sale of 72 Sukhoi SU-27 fighter planes, as well as the anti-aircraft Russian S-300 missile system and two destroyers equipped with missile launchers.

Mr. Rodionov said all arms sales to China were based on the principle of maintaining the current balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region.

"At the same time, all the weapons are for defensive use only," he added.

Mr. Rodionov arrived in China Monday for a six day visit, prior to Chinese President Jiang Zemin's state visit to Russia next week.

Alaska sues tobacco firms for damages, fraud

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — Alaska Monday joined a string of other states in suing tobacco makers, charging the companies have created more than \$100 million in medical costs for Alaska and engaged in consumer fraud and conspiracy to conceal the addictive nature of their product.

The 150-page lawsuit, filed in Alaska Superior Court in Juneau, also charged that tobacco companies and their industry research groups used deceptive tactics to target teenagers and contributed to the delinquency of minors.

Alaska Attorney General Bruce Botelho said.

Mr. Botelho announced the lawsuit during a special joint hearing of the Alaska House and Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee in the state capital in Juneau.

Alaska has been considering such a lawsuit for months, but delayed filing it in order to determine the appropriate strategy, Mr. Botelho said.

"In Candor, one of our major concerns was our ability to bring forward this action," he said.

A key factor in the decision to file a lawsuit, Mr. Botelho said, was the recent move by Brooke Group Ltd., Liggett Group Inc., one of the companies named in Alaska's lawsuit, to settle complaints brought by other states and to make public internal documents about the dangers of tobacco.

"Ultimately, the decision by the Liggett Group to turn state's evidence has just put it over the top, so that one would have to say it would have been irresponsible for us as a state not to join in this effort where we have an opportunity to recover substantial public monies that have been expended for the public health," Mr. Botelho said.

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Pessimism vs hope

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is inching closer to seeking a national unity government with the Labour Party despite opposition by elements in both his Likud Party and on the left. The representatives of the far-right and ultra-religious parties in Netanyahu's government are clearly opposed to any change in the composition of the government for fear that that would mean the end of their positions and influence as well as softening their hard-line stance on peace with the Arab side. On the left, former Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, the principal contender for the Labour Party leadership, and like-minded Labour Party members oppose the formation of a national unity government lest former Prime Minister Shimon Peres place his own political ambitions ahead of his group's platform. Barak was more than blunt when he expressed the view that any Netanyahu-Peres rapprochement would simply delay the latter's political retirement and forestall the rise of a new leadership in the Labour Party.

Yet despite all these reservations, Netanyahu seemed to give expression to a different kind of sentiment when he told the army radio on Saturday that "there exists a majority in the (Israeli) population that supports a final status accord" with the Palestinians "and this is not the case in the current government."

For once, his assessment goes to the heart of the crisis facing the peace process and there is nothing stronger than his own words to reflect the stark reality facing Israel. In fact, he did not stop there to justify the need for a national unity government. Israel, he went on to say, will have to make "very painful decisions" on the future of Jerusalem and the possible creation of a Palestinian state. Coming from this Israeli prime minister these words can be far-reaching as they signal a new perspective. We just hope, even though we cannot be optimistic, that it has finally dawned on Netanyahu that the hard-line policies that have been pursued by him, whether or not they are forced by the extremist forces within his cabinet, are bankrupt and could lead to disaster.

Without wishing to read too much into the fresh language that he seemed to use, Israel would appear at least poised to enter a new threshold of negotiations with the Palestinians, even the Syrians, should Netanyahu succeed in forming a new government minus the far-right and ultra-religious groups. If that proves to be the case, then the personal intervention of President Bill Clinton may be viewed as the crucial factor in saving the peace process.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily attacked the U.S. for demanding that the Arabs normalise relations with Israel which continues to occupy Arab territories and denies the Palestinians their legitimate rights. Hosni Ayesh said that the U.S. took 20 years, after signing a peace treaty with Vietnam, to normalise its relations with Hanoi and that the U.S. continues to impose an unjust embargo on Iraq, despite its implementation of all U.N. resolutions. The writer said that the American vetoing of the U.N. resolutions condemning Israel's practices does not only constitute an encouragement to the Jewish state to pursue atrocities, it also makes Washington an accomplice. The writer said that it is because the Israelis continue to occupy Arab lands and practise terrorist acts against the Palestinians that the Arabs have no alternative but to deny it any peace. The writer also stressed that the will of the Palestinian people is far stronger than all the terrorist activities and forces of the Jewish state.

A WRITER for Al Dustour commented on the recent television programme, called "The Jerusalem appeal", organised by the London-based MBC television, saying that the donations collected were too little, although the broadcast reached all corners of the Arab and Islamic World. Fakhri Kassar attributed the result of the campaign, which saw people contributing only \$7 million for Jerusalem, to the fact that very few people had confidence in the programme and doubted that their donations will reach the Jerusalem citizens. Drawing a contrast with a previous television programme organised by Jordan Television for Al Amal Cancer Centre, the writer said that a fairly larger amount was collected for the centre which the people can now see standing near the Jordan University Hospital. The donors were certain that the funds will be utilised in setting up this vital centre and because they were confident of it they generously offered contributions for its cause, according to the writer. He said it is not that the Muslims and Arabs around the world do not love Jerusalem and its people that they were reluctant to make donations, but because they were not convinced of the method used for raising funds and had no confidence that the funds will reach their destination.

Washington Watch

The battle for peace in Washington
— time for the administration to decide

By Dr. James Zogby

THE U.S. political debate regarding the Middle East peace process is in danger of spinning out of control. Tensions are higher and divisions are deeper than they have been since the darkest days of the occupation.

If this is an objective of the Netanyahu government, he is succeeding. His political rhetoric has taken hold among his supporters in the U.S. and the prime minister's frequent visits to the U.S. have allowed him the opportunity to continue to raise the propaganda level one notch each visit.

The grassroots in the Jewish community remain concerned about the politics of the Netanyahu government and fearful that the peace process may collapse, but the leadership of the pro-Israel Jewish organisations have buried whatever reservations they may have about Netanyahu's policies and are publicly lining up behind the right-wing prime minister.

When Netanyahu addressed the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) last week, many delegates to the event privately expressed concern with his confrontational politics. But the AIPAC leadership shamelessly led the over 2,000 strong audience (including 1,000 students who were bussed in ostensibly to learn grassroots politics) in rousing cheers for the prime minister's hardline speech.

One can see signs of growing ambivalence throughout the Jewish community. There is an explosion brewing over the prime minister's siding with a new Knesset effort to adopt an Orthodox proposal to delegitimise the reform and conservative branches of Judaism. Since 85 per cent of U.S. Jewry are reform and conservative, this can create a deep split in Jewish attitudes towards Israel.

Netanyahu's decision to cancel an appearance before a reform Jewish conference last week only added to the division. An announcement last month that the American branch of the Peace Now movement had hired as its executive director the former Chairman of the Democratic National Convention gives a further sign of growing opposition to Likud politics in the U.S. Jewish community.

After debating a national Jewish leader at the convention of another Jewish organisation a few weeks

ago, one Arab American leader noted the following: "Many in the audience supported my concerns and my arguments and were disturbed when the Jewish leader I was debating used harsh rhetoric and personal attacks in his response to me."

"It was," he continued, "like being caught in a time warp. The debate was like one we used to have in the late 1970s. But the audience still wanted peace and was not buying his line of attack."

Polis and personal contacts make it clear that most U.S. Jews remain supportive of peace, but the organised Jewish leadership and their allies in Congress and right-wing conservative organisations have lined up behind the Likud policies and rhetoric of the Netanyahu government.

Last week, Netanyahu used his U.S. appearances before a right-wing Christian group and AIPAC to push his hard line. While claiming to be pro-peace, his uncompromising tone and his anti-terrorism rhetoric made it clear that his intentions were to reignite the Arab-Israeli cold war conflict of the past.

Using the bot-button issues of Jerusalem and terrorism, Netanyahu evoked the all too comfortable propaganda of the past. And, at least with the pro-Israel and Jewish leadership, it is working. The Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organisations, members of Congress and conservative newspaper columnists are now all echoing Netanyahu themes.

When Vice President Al Gore spoke at AIPAC's conference the day before Netanyahu was to meet with President Clinton, he, too, delivered a speech that sounded more like an address of the 70s or 80s than the post-Oslo 90s.

A former Clinton White House official who worked with Gore noted that the vice president's speech, while striking the right one on the peace negotiations, was filled with pro-Israel rhetoric that sounded more like the speeches that Vice President Walter Mondale had given back in the 1980s. He explained: "Given the climate that Netanyahu has created with the Jewish leadership, I assumed the vice president was following political advice in attempting to not fall out of favour with the Jewish right-wing. Since one of his likely opponents for the presidency in 2000 (Minority Leader Dick

Gephardt) was addressing AIPAC the next day, Gore obviously wanted to show that he could be more pro-Israel than anyone."

"But," this former White House official noted, "giving that speech the day before Clinton was to meet with Netanyahu, had the potential effect of neutralising whatever pressure the president might have attempted to put on Netanyahu."

Even some Jewish leaders, some from AIPAC, noted that they found the speech to be "pandering," "embarrassing," and "unhelpful to the peace effort."

Not to be outdone, Democratic Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, in his AIPAC address, raised the stakes attempting to appear even more pro-Israel than Gore. But both Democrats were outdone by Republican Majority Leader Newt Gingrich who sharply criticised the Clinton administration for being, as he claimed, too soft on the Palestinians and for betraying America's ally, Israel, by openly pressuring Israel to stop the settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim.

It may be shocking for Arabs to know that even the modest displeasure that the administration is demonstrating towards the policies of the Netanyahu government is generating sharp criticism from both the U.S. Jewish leadership and Congress.

In a recent issue of a national Jewish newspaper, a number of Jewish leaders took issue with the administration's handling of the current issues. One said: "In recent weeks there's been a certain disquiet in the American Jewish community... there have been some tactical missteps by the administration in leaning too hard against Israel."

The same newspapers sharply rebuked Secretary of State Albright for refusing to address the AIPAC convention, using the headline "Albright spurns AIPAC date." To make their anger clear, the paper ran a large front page picture of Madeline Albright shaking hands with Palestinian Authority

much better. Right-wing columnists are daily playing out a harsh anti-Palestinian theme and there are a number of anti-Palestinian congressional initiatives under way to cut U.S. aid to Palestinians and otherwise punish the Palestinian Authority.

And so it appears that there is an effort to return to the days of zero-sum politics. Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) baiting, and anti-Arab McCarthyism — this is what Netanyahu has wrought.

All this echoes back to the very dark old days when Jewish groups used photos of individuals with Arafat in an effort to intimidate or discredit them. To make matters worse, a Jewish watchdog group has even issued an edict advising all American Jewish organisations to avoid any contact with Yasser Arafat until further notice.

It is important, however, to recognise that this assault by the pro-Likud Jewish right-wing organisations and Congress is not going unchallenged.

Despite the terrible signal sent by the two U.S. vetoes in the United Nations, the president and secretary of state have not given Israel the verbal support that Netanyahu wants.

Secretary Albright was quite firm in her private and public comments to last week's meeting with the visiting Israeli defence minister. She alone has made it clear in public comments that the settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim was a provocative act that must be understood as the cause of the breakdown in the peace process.

Albright was reported to have been quite tough with Netanyahu as well.

The president, too, has not been pleased with the Israeli prime minister's policies. While maintaining this administration's policy of not publicly pressuring or criticising Israel (a policy which many analysts are now saying is complicating the search for peace), the president has come fairly close to criticism.

The press reports following Clinton's meeting with Netanyahu read like the reports of old-time Kremlin watchers. Some noted the president's tight jaw, his absence of warmth and even his characterisation of the discussions as "hard and long." His repetition of U.S. "preference" that the settlement not be started and his urging Israel to provide confidence-building gestures and to refrain from

unilateral acts were all read in the press as intentional "rebukes" of the Israeli prime minister. These gestures may not be sharp enough to either meet Arab needs or to send the required message home to Israel, but they are being read correctly by the U.S. press.

Arab Americans, recognising that this is a moment of crisis and a time of challenge, have increased their activity during the past month.

Arab American efforts have been focused on challenging the administration to be fair, combating the negative rhetoric from Congress and right-wing columnists and engaging in debate in the press and before Jewish audiences.

While the community has been mobilised across the U.S., in Washington, specifically, Arab Americans have:

— brought together 42 Arab American organisations in support of a unified position calling on the administration to end Israeli policies of settlements building, land confiscation and the economic blockade of the Palestinian territories;

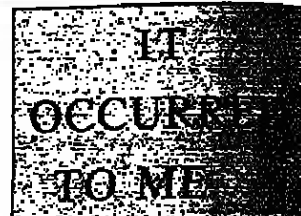
— had regular contact with the White House and State Department, including a meeting with Secretary of State Albright, urging balanced U.S. leadership and pressure on Israel to stop settlement construction;

— challenged members of Congress to stop their anti-peace moves and building broad national support for a positive pro-peace congressional effort organised by representatives supportive of the Arab American community; and

— engaged in a national education campaign with newspaper editorials, press briefings and speaking engagements, and events including speaking before Jewish organisations.

Washington has become a political battlefield once again. Netanyahu is playing hard and mobilising support to block any U.S. pressure. The enemies of peace are once again using rhetoric and tactics of the pre-peace era. They are being challenged, however, in the struggle for public opinion and in the policy debate.

The administration, which claims to understand the dangers to peace and U.S. interests if this downwards trend continues, must soon decide whether it has the political will to directly and forcefully challenge Israeli policy.



A date to remember

By Ali Kassay

NOW THAT the blessed Eid Al Adha is upon us, may everyone enjoy many happy returns of it and all that sort of thing: the moment is opportune to spread jollity by telling you a story with a happy ending.

Roughly at the tail end of 1995, a baby girl was born to a friend of mine. Now this may seem contrary to the normal run of stories with happy endings. As a rule they start off badly and get better. Stories that kick off with happy events, generally culminate in a sticky end. Well, in this case stickiness was not far away, and it came in the deceptively innocent form of a slip of the mind — or the pen, as it were.

You see, when a baby is born, the attending medical staff fill a report of birth which the parents would then present to the Civil Status Department to acquire a birth certificate. The nurse who filled the form in the first days of 1996, entered December 1996 as the date of birth. This was the thin end of the wedge. You see, in his happiness, the father did not notice the mistake until he had received a birth certificate dated January 1996, stating that his offspring was born in December 1996.

Even then our friend did not panic. He was confident that bureaucratic departments, regardless of their many attributes, do not claim the power to foretell the future and, therefore, they would immediately correct the mistake. Not so, it turned out. Civil status records, he was informed politely by the inquiries officer, cannot be changed except by a court order. Therefore, he would have to engage a lawyer to present the court with evidence that an error had been made, whereupon the judge, if satisfied, would order the correction. "Purely routine business, sir."

True enough, when the judge was presented with the testimony of the obstetrician, the midwife, the nurse who had filled the report of birth, and the hospital bill, and when this evidence was not contested by the defending counsellor who represented the Civil Status Department, he reasonably ordered that the records be amended, whereupon the defending counsellor appealed against the verdict.

Take a breather... let it sink in. The defending counsellor appealed against the verdict. Moreover, when the Court of Appeals rejected his appeal, he raised the matter to the Supreme Court, and only after the chief of the Supreme Court ruled to amend the record did he give up his dogged pursuit to leave the record unchanged. This happened three weeks ago, and more than two years' worth of court proceedings after the baby's birth. This was the happy ending which elated the parent and filled him with relief and goodwill to all men.

A foreigner, particularly one of the Western persuasion, would be surprised at Jordan's classification of a happy ending. He would say that this was an utter waste of court time, parents' time, and of taxpayers' money, which should be investigated and curbed. What do they know? We in Jordan recognise a blessing from God when we see it. After all, the matter stopped at being a waste of time and money. Someone might have insisted on taking sections of the baby for carbon dating.

Then again, perhaps I had better stop before I give someone great ideas. After all, the golden rule of contentment in our part of the world is that when you are sitting cushy, keep quiet.

LETTERS

Charismatic democracy

To the Editor:

THE WRITERS of our Constitution must have been unduly optimistic in assuming that the expression of different viewpoints through party politics would automatically guarantee harmony.

In the early years of the history of Jordan there had been severe constraints on democracy, such as limited franchise, strong executive power and weak legislature.

Recently, however, the regime has shown a great interest in introducing authentic democracy and to turn it into a way of life for Jordanians. In this regard, it must be recalled that the main characteristics of true democracy include, among others: free and critical inquiry, compromise, an opposition which functions as a legitimate partner in the democratic process, a pluralism of values and associations, a negation of one party or one dogma, recognition of individual liberties.

Democracy functions through the extension of the suffrage, strengthening of the power of parliaments that ensure proportional representation and express the popular will.

Democracy, however, will always be weakened by the absence of talented and popular statesmen who should concentrate on national issues instead of personalising political discourse. Unfortunately, this has not been the case so far in our midst. But until the state institutions, especially political parties, start to function and acquire the tradition of democracy, politicians will continue to squabble and quarrel for some time to come.

Sultan Kh. Abu Jabar,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Pen mightier than sword

To the Editor:

I AM a converted Muslim (from Christianity) who lives in the United States. I pray for peace in your country and wish I could stop all the bloodshed.

I am sure a way to stop fighting is refusal to do so and, instead, have peaceful protest marches covered by the media.

Instead of playing war games and spending money on weapons, Arabs should buy media time in the U.S. and report to the world what is happening; world nations should be made to see the killing and realise who is the author of the wrong deeds. The Americans should be shown the course of history and the current events daily. The media should be used as a weapon: knowledge is power. give it to the people.

This is a new age. People do not want to fight, they want to live in peace.

Muslims should take their case to the world, fill the air in the U.S., with the whole truth; they should buy radio and TV stations, communications companies, utilities, stocks. The Americans believe anything they see and hear on TV.

And since the pen is mightier than the sword, it is only through control of the media that truth can be heard and fights can be won.

Hamzah Abdul Qudus,
GWASHING@worldnet.att.net,
U.S.

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Features

Jordan Times, Wednesday, April 16, 1997

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'Petra is not just for Jordan or the archaeologists, it is a world cultural heritage'

By Tim Friend

PETRA NATIONAL PARK — The rose-red city of Petra, half as old as time, is showing rapidly advancing signs of age. Registered as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations and regarded as one of the most endangered sites in antiquity, Petra is a city of unique sandstone temples melting under a cascade of flash floods and crumbling beneath the footsteps of too many careless tourists. But now an ambitious effort to rescue the city is being led here by the Petra National Trust (PNT), a group of scientists, philanthropists — including American real estate developer Bruce Ludwig — and Jordanian royalty. Preserving Petra will depend largely on how successful the PNT is at resurrecting an elaborate water system built more than 2,000 years ago by the city's inhabitants, the ancient Nabateans.

The PNT has just completed an exhaustive study of the system and is beginning a multimillion-dollar restoration project. "Petra is one of the endangered sites of greatest importance, ranking with the likes of Pompeii and the Taj Mahal," says John Stubbs of New York's World Monuments Fund, which selects ancient sites facing destruction and helps pay for their conservation. At Mr. Ludwig's urging, the fund is support-

ing the Petra rescue effort. Carved from the sheer canyon walls, Petra's many sandstone monuments once were part of a desert oasis of fountains, verdant gardens, olive groves and vineyards. The city was home to 30,000 inhabitants, and the canyons were a natural fortress for the capital of an empire that extended to southern Syria and included Damascus.

At the crossroads of the major trade routes linking the Middle East to Egypt and the Far East, passing caravans were forced to pay tolls to the Nabateans and to trade spices and fabrics for food and water. But the real key to the Nabateans' success was their elaborate system of dams, cisterns, rock-hewn channels and closed clay pipes. It proved the water made possible a thriving metropolis in a desert canyon, says Joseph Greene of the Semitic Museum at Harvard University. The ancient water system also diverted flash floods away from Petra's carved sandstone facades, and it prevented soil and sand from filling the Bab Al Siq, the narrow gorge that is the only means of entering the famed rose city.

"Until now, no one has appreciated this technology," says Prince Raad Ben Zeid, the influence behind the PNT. "Restoring the Nabatean hydraulic system is the first priority for saving Petra."

Talal S. Akasbeh, dean of research and graduate studies at Hashemite University in Jordan, says Petra today is like a house without gutters or plumbing. Reconstructing the water system will slow the rate of erosion and make it possible to restore the gardens and transform Petra into a living archaeological park. There also are pragmatic reasons to rebuild the ancient water system.

"There is a water shortage in Jordan, and this teaches us about water harvesting," says Aysar Akrawi, director of the PNT. If the restoration is successful, the low-tech approach to harvesting water developed by the Nabateans could possibly be adapted to other regions of the country, Prince Raad says.

Meanwhile, Petra remains an unopened treasure for the world, says Mr. Ludwig, whose passion for antiquities has led to his support of nearly a dozen excavations or preservation projects around the world. Less than 2 per cent of the city of Petra has been excavated, he says. Many valuable artefacts remain buried in the sand.

At first glance, Petra's destruction seems improbable. It is a vast and hauntingly beautiful city of palaces, tombs and temples. The first light at dawn still paints the upper rim of the Siq in the same swirling sandstone hues of yellow, purple and red that



Rock urn of the Monastery

visitors from passing caravans observed in Petra's prime. A half mile into the cool shadows of the Siq, the narrow corridor opens suddenly onto Al Khazneh, or Treasury, the most celebrated of Petra's many monuments.

In a letter to her father in 1900, author Gertrude Bell described it: "We went on in ecstasies until suddenly between the narrow opening of the rocks we saw the most beautiful sight I have ever seen: imagine a tem-

ple cut out of solid rock, the charming facade supported on great Corinthian columns. But the sharp relief of figures described by Bell has faded dramatically since her visit less than 100 years ago. So has much of the relief of the carved monuments throughout Petra, where beyond the Khazneh are dozens of royal tombs cut in crow-stepped Babylonian style, a great Romanesque theatre carved from a hillside, tri-

umphal arches, a paved city street and many more magnificent temples.

"When Petra was a living city, the people who lived there maintained the water system and kept the buildings up," Mr. Greene says. "It still needs to be maintained for the monuments to remain visible." Above the canyons on the sloping plateaus, the Nabateans built walls and terraced fields to prevent soil erosion and to divert runoff from winter floods away from Petra's monuments, says Maan Huneidi, the engineer who headed the PNT study. Mr. Huneidi has mapped the water system for its reconstruction.

Countless cisterns were carved into flat rock in the highest places. Small wells were dug to collect flowing water on upland plains, rectangular cisterns carved at the base of natural drips and huge chambers cut into the vertical rock face, through which complex channels and conduits flowed.

The Nabateans also created drip stones for collecting condensation from fogs and frosts on rock walls. "Any quantity of running water, from the smallest drop to the biggest floods, was stored," Mr. Huneidi says.

Once erosion and flooding are minimised, preservation of the crumbling monuments can begin, and more of Petra can be excavated. Many of the tops of entrances to unexplored temples are tantalizingly vis-

ible just above the sandy ground. The PNT also has surveyed the region's flora and fauna, and with a renewed water resource intends to revive Petra's natural plant life, which has been mostly extinguished by drought and grazing goats.

But before Petra can be rescued, the PNT faces numerous obstacles. Tourism to Petra, which is a vital part of the Jordanian economy, must also be controlled. In peak seasons, more than 1,000 tourists a day stream through Petra, and they leave in their wake a trail of debris and further destruction of the monuments. At a massive rock-cut temple known as Al Deir, or the Monastery, near Mr. Huneidi's cistern, Ms. Akrawi points to a tourist who has scaled the temple and is sitting atop a fragile urn. "The tourist is very much left to his own devices in Petra," she says. "He is perfectly capable of touching anything and going anywhere, and this poses a safety problem for both the tourist and the monuments."

Development of the surrounding plateaus also is a threat. What once were terraced olive groves are giving way rapidly to hotels, and the hillsides are gouged by new construction sites. Meanwhile, the local Bedouin people who have occupied Petra's caves and temples for at least 1,000 years, pose their own unique

problems. They construct wooden shacks inside Petra to sell bottles filled with coloured sandstone chipped from the monuments and crushed into a fine powder. They also sell delicate Nabatean pottery, ancient Nabatean coins and other pillaged artefacts. It is illegal for tourists to purchase anything in Jordan that is more than 100 years old. The Bedouin's goats, donkeys, and trash also are continuously found inside the monuments and the many caves once used for burials. Clinging the Bedouin's habits and controlling tourism could prove more difficult than restoring the Nabateans' complex water system. But the PNT already is having some success, and Mr. Greene says the world's experts in the preservation of antiquities will be watching and learning.

"The entire Petra region is threatened by its own popularity," he says. "The more popular the site becomes, and the more accessible it becomes, the more people will need water. There will be more sewage, more garbage, more buildings and more roads. There needs to be a balance between the need for success and the preservation of the site for the long term. It cannot be exploited just for this generation. Petra is not just for Jordan or the archaeologists. It is a world cultural heritage."

USA Today

Far away but not long ago, Tristan is no time warp

By Brendan Boyle
Reuters

EDINBURGH OF THE SEVEN SEAS — Lonely they may be on their remote south Atlantic island, but visitors should not confuse the isolation of Tristan da Cunha with ignorance.

Chief islander Jimmy Glass, elected head of the 320-strong Tristan community, complains that many of their few visitors arrive briefed by outdated books and looking for a time warp.

Most atlases show Tristan da Cunha as no more than a dot on the map, a pinprick on the wide blue south Atlantic roughly halfway between South Africa and Brazil.

"People come here for a day, or even for a few hours. They look back to Tristan maybe before the volcano time, when people were wearing Victorian dresses and 'mossacans' and they lived entirely off potatoes," he said.

In fact, the forced evacuation of the island in 1961, when the apparently dormant volcano opened a new vent and spewed lava to within metres of the village, catapulted the world's most remote island into the 20th century.

After two years in military barracks at Calshot in England, the islanders voted by 148 to five to return home, taking with them experiences, good and bad.

Oil lamps gave way to electricity, boots displaced the hand stitched leather "mossacans" — the local pronunciation of "moccasins" — that lasted a hard-working farmer as little as two months and tin roofs took over from the flax with which they thatched their stone houses.

Catherine Glass, wife of the island chief and curator of Tristan's museum, says her display cabinets are the place to look for the forgotten people some visitors expect to find.

"I think a house here has got just as much as you would find in a house in Britain. We have electric



The tiny settlement of Edinburgh of the Seven Seas on the South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha. The island, the most remote settlement in the world, is visited once a year by a ship carrying passengers and cargo from Britain and South Africa (Reuters photo)

lights, gas cookers, freezers, baths, showers. I mean, we've got Kenwood mixers and everything," she said.

More importantly, she said, the islanders have achieved a level of education that helps to bridge the ocean between Tristan and the British homeland or South Africa, its nearest neighbour 1,500 nautical miles to the east.

"Going to England and coming back made us more experienced. Things we took for granted before, we won't anymore. I think we're firmer, we're wiser now," she said.

Island authorities have refused to allow journalists back who have published inaccurate reports and, though the whole community is participating in a search for the genetic origin of asthma, which afflicts more than half the population, they do not welcome sociological inspection.

One writer whose work they disliked was refused permission to land when he arrived offshore aboard a passing ship.

Throughout the village they call Edinburgh of the Seven Seas and across the

four-mile-by-half-mile plain that is their everyday universe, progress and tradition are juxtaposed.

Cattle graze alongside the white domes of a satellite telephone antenna in a lush green field grey cement-block walls of an unfinished house contrast with a neighbour's traditional hewn lava and a blonde teenager in jeans, jogging shoes and T-shirt chats to 70-year-old Ernest Repetto, whose mahogany face is weathered by decades of fishing and farming.

Traditional longboats are lashed down against the

frequent gales across a road from a cluster of rugged dinghies.

Mr. Repetto says the greatest change is the replacement of bullock carts by tractors to haul the boats and their catch from the harbour. Landrovers and a bus to carry pensioners to their potato patches at the far end of the settlement plain.

"We grow our potatoes and we keep our own cattle and sheep. Life on Tristan is very good. There's a lot of traffic, but they're careful with it," he said.

Crayfish, the clawless

lobster endemic to the islands of the Tristan group, earns most of the community's income, with postage stamps and a tuna concession adding to it.

Though no white fish is exported, good catches of yellowtail, barracuda and bluefish supplement the island diet.

Patricia Repetto, 53, lives at the western end of the village near the single bus-stop and grows a spectacular English garden that stops almost every one of the 100 to 200 tourists who visit the island each year.

With the generosity

revealed everywhere, she makes it hard for a visitor to leave her living room — where two hi-fi sets, a television and video player reflect the family's favourite pastimes — without a gift of woollen Tristan socks.

Each family is allowed to keep three cows and seven sheep, which they shear around November for the coarse, oil-rich wool that makes the island's renowned sweaters.

The wool is laid out on the lava-stone walls that define the streets and gardens to be washed by the

rain before it is processed, then hand spun and knitted into socks and sweaters both for the farmers and fishermen and for tourists.

When the royal mail ship St. Helena makes its annual visit with up to 100 passengers or a cruise-ship anchors offshore, islanders go out in their sturdy workboats to sell their crafts to passengers unable to make the sometimes perilous jump from rope ladder to launch for a walk ashore.

Around Christmas when the island government and the crayfish factory close down for three weeks, Tristanians catch up on their farm work and, if time allows, go on holiday.

Some go camping at the black cinder beach three miles from Edinburgh and some go by boat to huts on the opposite side of their eight-mile-wide island.

"They're a community, you can feel that. They are tremendously friendly and generous. Of course, they have their squabbles. That happens everywhere — they are human. But on the whole they are very happy," said Catholic priest Anthony Agreiter, who visits for three months every two to three years.

"They know what is going on in the world. They have radios...Videos. They are not altogether cut off. Time has not stood still on Tristan...It has just ticked by more slowly."

Qatar aims to be major gas exporter by 2000

DOHA (R) — Gulf Arab Qatar aims to export an annual 12 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) by the year 2000, Qatar's Energy and Industry Minister Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah has said.

Qatar was also targeting output of 30 million tonnes based on huge gas reserves at its North Field — the world's largest non-associated offshore gas field — and a new industrial city and LNG port at Ras Laffan, he said.

"We can reach 30 million tonnes in the future. The reserves support it and the port is there," Mr. Attiyah said in an interview on the sidelines of a gas conference in Doha.

The Arab Gulf state is on course to become a major gas exporter with its foreign-backed Qatargas and Rasgas plants both expected to be onstream by the turn of the decade.

Negotiations with U.S. Enron Corp are underway regarding the setting up of a third, \$5 billion LNG plant in Qatar, a small OPEC oil

producer.

LNG exports from Qatar — a joint venture between Qatar's state oil firm Qatar General Petroleum Corp (QGPC) and U.S. French and Japanese firms — began in December.

"Work is progressing in the construction of the third production train to increase the plant's capacity from four million tonnes to six million tonnes annually to supply seven electric and gas companies in Japan as from September 1998," Mr. Attiyah told delegates in a conference speech.

Qatargas production would reach six million tonnes by 2000 while Rasgas — a project between QGPC, U.S. Mobil Corp, Japanese and South Korean firms — would also be producing up to six million tonnes in 2000, Mr. Attiyah said.

"Implementation of the first stage of Ras Laffan for natural gas has started in order to supply the Korean Gas Corporation with natural gas as from mid-1999," said Mr. Attiyah.

Enron had to secure a firm sales and purchase agreement with potential customers, probably in India, before Qatar was ready to sign up for a third project, Mr. Attiyah told Reuters.

"We are ready... You have to get the horse first (before the cart)," Mr. Attiyah said.

Enron signed a letter of intent with Qatar in 1995 to produce five million tonnes of LNG from 2001 and has set itself a schedule to sign a joint venture with QGPC by end of march.

But the project start-up became embroiled in commercial rivalries and politics in Tel Aviv and Bombay, the capital of the western Indian state of Maharashtra where the Dabhol power project being built by Enron is located.

Talks were also continuing between Japan's Chubu Electric Power Company on the final price for the supply of an annual four million tonnes of Qatargas LNG, Mr. Attiyah said.

Oman seeks foreign funds for major projects

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf state of Oman is planning to introduce further measures to attract foreign capital to diversify its oil-reliant economy and finance major projects, officials have said.

The non-OPEC oil producer, committed to sweeping reforms to invigorate its economy, announced last year plans to liberalise its investment laws to give more access to foreign businessmen.

And officials said the measures could include forcing companies listed on the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) to allow foreign investors to buy more shares.

"There are plans now to ensure all companies trading in the stock market do not put any obstacles for the movement of foreign capital if they want to remain listed," MSM executive president Mahmoud Jarwani told AFP.

"We are planning to meet within two weeks to decide on this issue. The measures will also affect all new firms seeking to be listed in the market," he said.

Mr. Jarwani added that several Omani companies had responded to government recommendations by opening up to foreign investors, who are allowed to own up to 49 per cent of a national firm. But some companies are still blocking attempts by foreigners to own shares, he added.

"We want all national companies to remove any kind of obstacles and restrictions and facilitate the movement of foreign capital according to the limits specified by the investment laws in the country," he said.

"This will certainly boost the movement of foreign capital. We are talking about projects under way or to be carried out and worth billions of dollars... They need funds from abroad because local resources are not sufficient."

Oman has introduced a set of incentives over the past few years to lure investment as part of overall reforms that also include privatisation, development of the non-oil sector and better taxation systems.

The country, which produces around 900,000 barrels per day of oil, has already privatised five public institutions and set up projects with the participation of the private sector.

Algeria to cap debt servicing to boost growth

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria hopes to keep its debt servicing rate at no more than 35 per cent of export earnings to the year 2000, well below the 90 per cent paid in 1993.

Finance Minister Abdul karim Harchaoui said Algeria had cut its foreign debt servicing rate to 31 per cent in 1996 from 44 per cent in 1995 to bolster its international credibility and to sustain economic growth.

He told Reuters in an interview that he expected a 35 per cent debt servicing rate in 1997 and a rate of between 30-35 per cent to the year 2000.

"The debt servicing rate will be at the maximum level of 35 per cent in 1997 when the exports value will reach around \$13 billion and very likely more than that amount because Algeria is the only country which made the most number of oil and gas discoveries in recent years," he said.

Mr. Harchaoui complained that some export finance guarantee agencies of foreign governments were charging higher premiums for Algeria because they were exaggerating its country risk.

"Then Algerian importers did not use these loans and

turned to alternative markets and preferred to pay cash for their imports because these premiums had a deterrent effect upon them," he said.

Algeria has been without an elected parliament since 1992 when the authorities scrapped a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead. Since then about 60,000 people have died in violence between Islamist rebels and government forces.

But Algeria has kept up its energy exports throughout the years of violence and foreign companies have kept a presence in the country to exploit its vast oil and gas reserves.

The value of the OPEC member's oil and gas exports rose to \$12.6 billion in 1996, up 29 per cent from the year before, according to figures released by the country's oil officials.

Planned development of the Nord Africa country's oil and gas industry will increase crude output to one million barrels per day and 60 billion cubic metres of gas annually by the year 2000, energy officials said.

Algeria currently has an estimated crude production of 830,000 barrel per day and

exports around 30 billion cubic metres of gas per year.

The country is striving to foster non-oil and gas exports with the liberalisation of the foreign trade business allowing more private exporters to enter the market.

"The 35 per cent foreign debt servicing rate in 1997 will leave us with more than \$9.0 billion of export earnings to finance imports," Mr. Harchaoui said.

He forecast that Algeria will get foreign loans to finance capital goods for industry, which represent about 25 per cent of total imports.

Imports stood at slightly more than \$9.0 billion in 1996 because of bumper cereals harvest enabling the country to cut food imports and at about \$11 billion in 1995, Mr. Harchaoui said.

Foreign debt stood at \$31.5 billion in 1996 against \$31.2 billion in 1995 and would not rise above \$32 billion this year, he added.

"We have a cautious indebtedness policy which will neither call in to question our external finance balance nor the need to finance the development of the economy," he added.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	ALG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7340	0.6156	1.4695	126.33	1.3985	1708.00	1.9484	5.2297	
DE Mark	0.5767	-	0.3546	0.8482	72.80	0.9048	983.05	1.1241	3.3629
GB Sterling	1.6245	2.8185	-	2.3886	205.11	2.2886	2771.26	3.1674	9.4721
CH Franc	0.6805	117.81	0.4180	-	55.93	0.9495	1158.70	132.48	3.9604
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3719	0.4888	1.1628	-	1.1048	13.48	154.24	4.6128
CA Dollar	0.7161	1.2423	0.4406	1.0531	1.10	-	1221.51	1.3965	4.1751
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0164	0.3605	0.8862	1352.08	0.8183	-	11.42	3.4188
NL Guilder	0.5130	88.90	0.3155	75.43	64.74	0.7159	874.44	-	2.9995
FR Franc	0.1715	0.2973	0.1055	25.2161	21.63	0.2394	33.43	33.4300	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBR	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7503	0.3770	3.6400	0.3043	3.6705	1540.00	3.3850
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2970	0.5324	5.1412	0.4287	5.1843	2175.14	4.7811
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.1858	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	410.63	0.9026
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	9.9485	-	9.55	0.8071	9.74	4085.21	8.9795
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0836	1.01	423.08	0.9299
Kuwait Dinar	3.2867	2.3270	12.3280	1.2390	11.96	-	12.06	5061.46	0.9299
Emirates Dinar	0.2724	0.1929	1.0217	1.0217	0.9917	0.0829	-	419.56	0.9222
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4597	2.4383	0.2448	2.3638	0.1976	2.3834	-	2.1981
Egyptian	0.2554	0.2092	1.1079	0.1114	1.0753	0.0899	1.0843	454.95	-

Energy									
	Brent	WTI	NYMEX	London	Algeria	Libya	Iran	Ukraine	Other
Brent	17.65	17.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WTI	17.70	18.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bony	17.65	17.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dubai	16.45	16.25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UL Gas	18.00	18.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Mid-East Currencies									
	SA Riyal	AE Dirham	KW Dinar	BH Dinar	CY Pound				
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4628	0.16414	0.3921	33.6984				
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.47266	0.16771	0.40062	34.4317				
KW Dinar	3.2867	5.70125	2.02306	4.83325	415.282				
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.80163	1.63292	3.90016	336.233				
CY Pound	1.9372	3.3998	1.1921	2.8476	244.705				

Metal Prices									
	Gold (oz's)	Silver (oz's)	Platinum (oz's)	AL (3 Months)	CU (3 Months)	Zinc (3 Months)	Lead (3 Months)	Ni (3 Months)	
Gold (oz's)	341.7	342.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Silver (oz's)	4.88	4.71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Platinum (oz's)	362.3	364.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AL (3 Months)	1554	1555	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CU (3 Months)	2281	2283	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zinc (3 Months)	1258	1259	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lead (3 Months)	645	646	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ni (3 Months)	7385	7400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Change	High	Low	Pr.Gls.			
New York	DOW JONES	6542.21	90.31	1.4	6545.42	6452.7	6451.9		
New York	S&P 500	732.32	6.59	1.15	733.38	743.73	743.73		
London	FT-SE 100	4266.8	35.1	0.83	4289.1	4260.1	4251.7		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	17933.59	241.12	1.36	18000.6	17712.1	17692.5		
Paris	CAC 40	2626.63	54.5	2.12	2626.54	2572.61	2568.13		
Frankfurt	DAX	3327.88	47.78	1.46	3337.01	3323.27	3279.9		

Energy									
	Commodity	Last	Delivery						
Coffee (c/lbs)	197.67	Spot							
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1443	Spot							
Sugar (\$/ton)	307.5	Spot							
Wheat (\$/ton)	0	Spot							
Soya (c/lbs)	22.65	Spot							
Tea (slg/kg)	142	Spot							
Barley (\$/ton)	0	Spot							
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot							

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

1 Sprite

4 Ballet dancer

9 Mountain in Thessaly

13 Encircled

15 Muse of poetry

16 Like peas in —

17 Hoffman/Franz film

20 Strip

21 Stare in wonder

22 Hill in San Francisco

23 Allego

25 Type of engine

27 Hurting

29 Kimer of films

31 High official: abbr.

32 Political letters

33 Rose and Fountain

35 "Frome"

38 Fragrance

40 Sniggle's prey

41 Beat

42 Bowler's button

43 Garb

45 Broadcast

46 Golf gadgets

48 Observe

49 Fraudulent scheme

50 Intoxicated

53 Semi, e.g.

55 Coach

56 Paragonian

58 Asian land

59 Concurs

61 Police dogs

64 Within: pref.

65 Stop

68 Departed

67 Take a breather

68 Rims

69 — Palmas

DOWN

1 Mild expletive

2 — rickey

3 Petinkir/Winger film

4 Mislead

5 Period of note

6 Youth group

7 Up

8 Add horsepower

9 Clumsy fellow

10 Food fish

11 Wise lawgiver

12 Sun-dried brick

14 Sincerely

18 Lupino of films

19 Polecats

24 Ended the chess game

26 — noire

27 Seaweed derivative

28 Essence

30 Lascivious looks

33 Kneecap

34 Weather word

36 Samoan seaport

37 Average

39 Timid

44 Woolen blankets

47 Rap session?

49 Slotted head fastener

50 Electronic beeper

51 Castle or Dunne

52 Gave medicine to

54 Sound of disgust

57 Type of rug

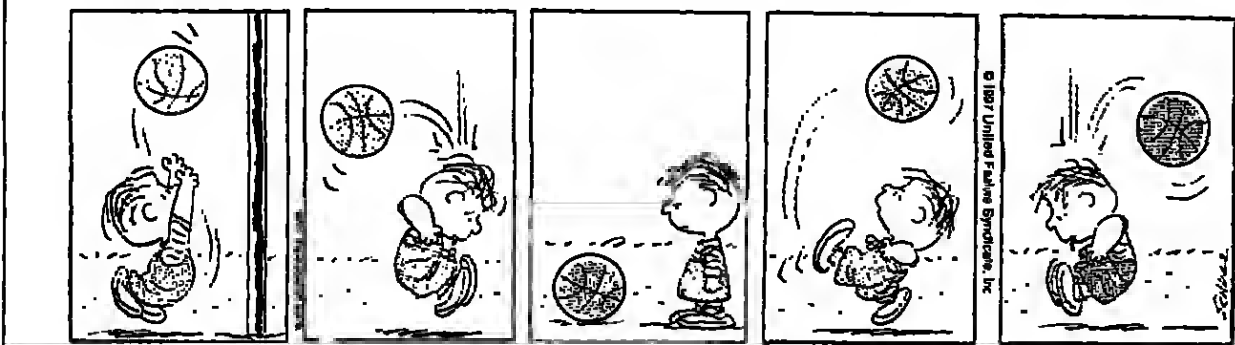
59 — St. Vincent

60 Concordes

62 Bon —

63 Native of: suff.

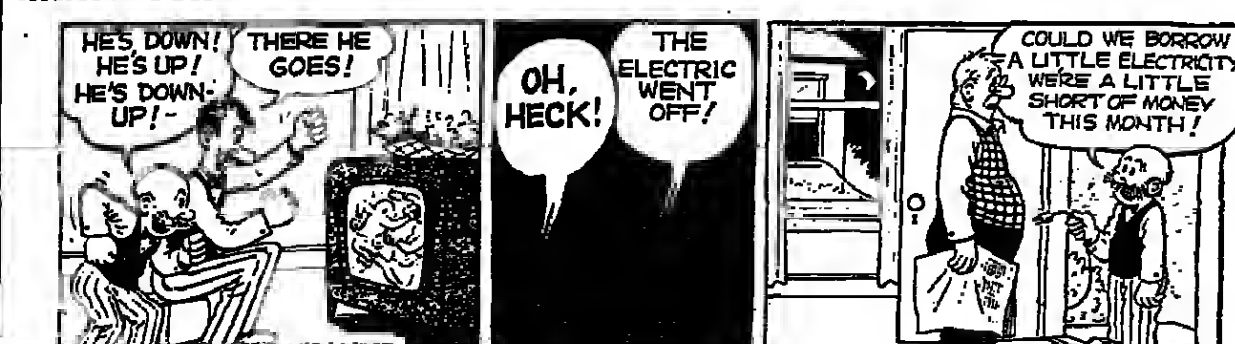
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY APRIL 16, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer Carroll, Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Keep your mind focused on happy, cheerful thoughts today and you'll be able to present your ideas more clearly. Don't let your mate later this evening upset you with some outrageous demands which could cause difficulties.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Listen to any suggestions from a superior or today, however avoid a demanding fellow associate who could make your business activities quite difficult. Be sure to finish any projects you start this morning and complete them.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be very cautious today when handling the details of your career activities, or you could make a costly mistake. Don't put any pressure on your fellow associates to speed up any projects which are on a deadline.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't try to force your views on your loved ones today, however listen to their opinions before making any decisions. You should not run off on any tangents which could jeopardize your career activities.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) An opportunity through which you can benefit greatly today will become apparent. Be very careful where your health is concerned so that you won't become sick and miss any days of career activities which are important.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is not a good day today to go out visiting or shopping unless it is absolutely necessary. If you must go out, be very careful while driving on the highway so that you won't get into any difficulties.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get together with an old friend today for a day of pleasant recreational activities, however, don't spend too much money or you could find yourself short of funds. Be more romantic with your mate by doing something special.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Proceed with any new projects you've been considering today, however if you need any financial advice, be sure to seek out an expert's opinion. Later this evening will be good for meeting with knowledgeable people for their advice.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be sure to handle today any written communications very carefully so that there won't be any mistakes. You may discover a new business contact this evening, so ask plenty of questions and pick his or her brain.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Avoid a person today who likes to preach and never listens to any opposing viewpoints. Try to please your mate by being more considerate of his or her feelings and provide that person with a firm shoulder to lean on.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A good friend can help you gain your aims today, so don't be afraid to rely upon this person. You can gain some personal wishes easily if you are persistent in your endeavours of a business nature to be successful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Ask advice from a superior today who can help you modernise your activities. Don't listen to any caustic remarks from a new acquaintance who does not have the ability to give constructive criticism which will be helpful.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

Timberwolves knock off Heat as Pacers beat Knicks

MIAMI (R) — The Minnesota Timberwolves shocked the Miami Heat 95-87 Monday for their first road win against an over-500 team this season.

Stephon Marbury had 17 points and Terry Porter 16 for the Timberwolves, who scored the first 16 points, blew the lead, but recovered to keep alive hopes of their first .500 season.

Minnesota (39-40), which is headed to the playoffs for the first time, has defeated just three winning teams since the all-star break.

"I think we were focused, we were fresh and you do get up for a team like this," Minnesota coach Flip Saunders said. "Miami is a team that's going to have a chance to compete for the championship and I think we caught them a little bit by surprise."

Alonzo Mourning scored 20 points and Tim Hardaway 15 for the Heat, who have dropped two in a row after winning 14 of 15. Miami needs one win to join Chicago and Utah as the only clubs with 60 wins.

"Whatever positive happened in the last three to four days can be negated by something like this," Heat coach Pat Riley said. "This was a poor, lackadaisical effort."

"Complacency is a disease that sits on your shoulder and waits for you to let your guard down. We've got to stop reading newspapers and accepting all these pats on the back."

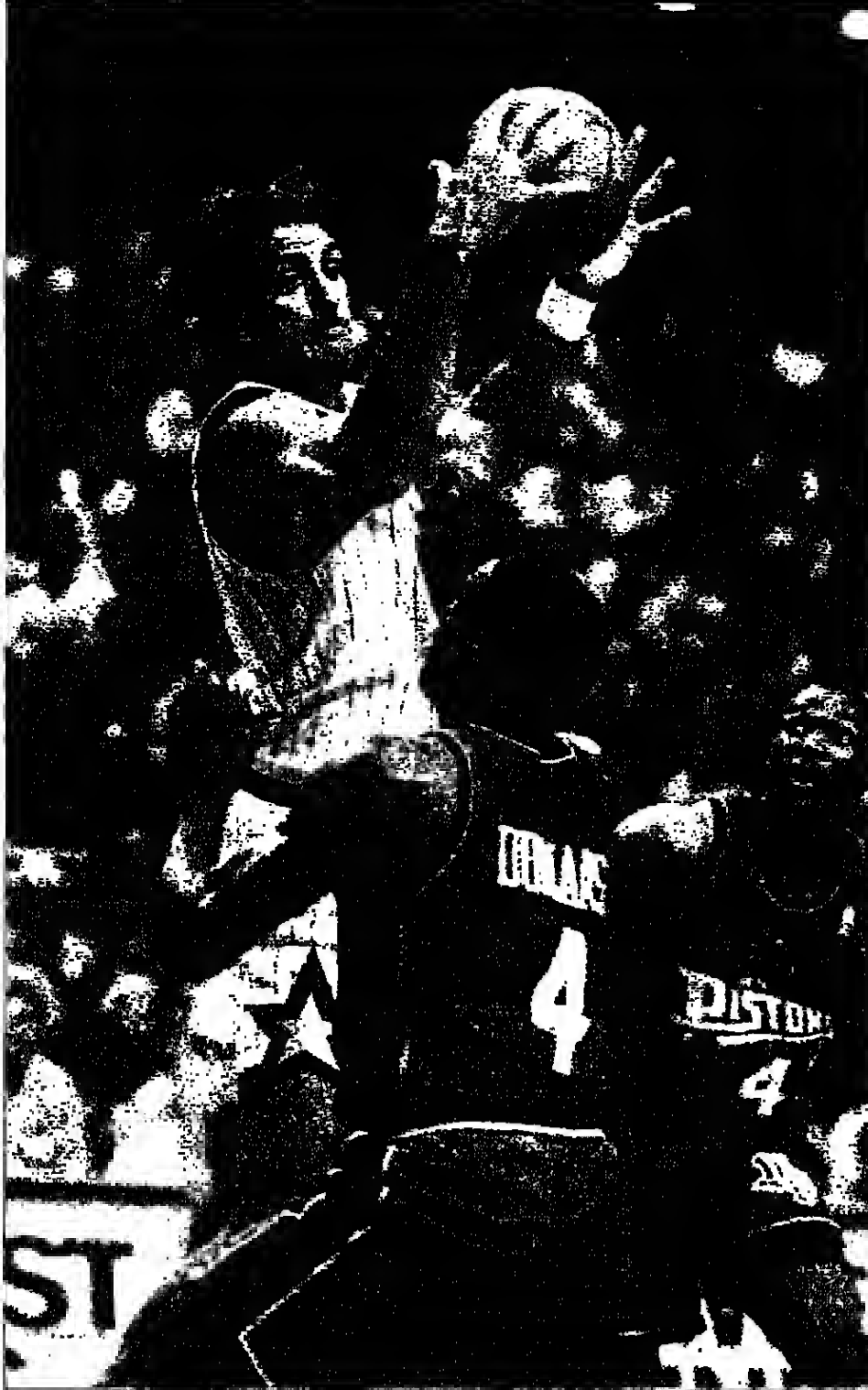
In Charlotte, Glen Rice scored 25 points as the Hornets tied their franchise record with their eighth straight win and dealt the Cleveland Cavaliers' playoff chances a damaging blow, with a 94-82 victory.

Ricky Pierce added 17 points for the Hornets, who moved into sole possession of fifth place in the Eastern Conference after Detroit lost to Orlando.

Terrell Brandon and Boh Suran scored 20 points apiece for Cleveland, in ninth place in the East and one game behind the Bulls for the final playoff berth. Both teams have three games left but Washington has the tiebreaker edge.

In Indiana, Reggie Miller scored seven of his 24 points in overtime and his jumper with 24 seconds to go provided the final margin as the Pacers beat the New York Knicks 110-107.

Dale Davis added a



Orlando Magic center Rony Seikaly pulls down a rebound against Detroit Pistons' center Joe Dumars during first-half NBA action in the Orlando Arena (Reuters photo)

career-high 23 points for Indiana, which remained alive in the playoff hunt. The Pacers (39-40) need to win their final three games and receive help from both the Bulls and Cavaliers to avoid missing the playoffs for the first time since the 1989 season.

John Starks scored 31 points and Patrick Ewing 26 before fouling out and being ejected in overtime for New York (54-25), which fell one-half game behind Atlanta for third place in the East. The Knicks host the Hawks Wednesday.

In Philadelphia, Chris Webber and Juwan Howard scored 27 points apiece as the Washington Bullets grabbed sole possession of the eighth playoff spot in the East with a 131-110 rout of the 76ers.

Washington (41-38) has not made the playoffs since the 1987-88 season.

In Orlando, Penny Hardaway scored 21 points as the Magic locked up seventh place in the East with their fourth straight victory, 100-91 over the Detroit Pistons.

The Magic will face the Heat in the first round of the playoffs. Grant Hill notched his 13th triple-double of the season for the Pistons, who blew a 16-point lead and fell one game behind Charlotte into sixth place in the East.

"We're a tired team," said Hill. "I think that the combination of Orlando coming out and playing well."

"We played beautiful basketball in the first half. They came out and played hard in the second."

In Chicago, Michael Jordan recorded his first triple-double since 1992 as the Bulls moved within one victory of their second consecutive 70-win season with a 117-100 win over the Toronto Raptors.

Jordan had 30 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for the 27th triple-double of his career and first since December 29, 1992 against Charlotte.

In Dallas, the Los Angeles Clippers clinched their first playoff berth in four years with a 99-93 victory over the Mavericks as Darrick Martin scored 21 points.

Malik Sealy added 15 points for Los Angeles, which nailed down its first playoff berth since the 1992-93 season, when current Indiana coach Larry Brown guided the team.

The Clippers (36-43) are in eighth place in the Western Conference, three games behind both Phoenix and Minnesota for the seventh spot with three games to play.

In Denver, the Golden State Warriors banded the Nuggets their eighth straight loss, 103-93.

Chris Mullin scored 20 points for the Warriors. In Sacramento, Mitch Richmond scored 33 points and Brian Grant added a season-high 20 and 12 rebounds as the lottery-bound Kings defeated the San Antonio Spurs 120-106.

RESULTS

Charlotte	94	Cleveland	82
Minnesota	95	Miami	87
Orlando	100	Detroit	91
Washington	131	Philadelphia	110
Chicago	117	Toronto	100
LA Clippers	99	Dallas	93
Indiana	110	New York	107 (OT)
Golden State	103	Denver	93
Sacramento	120	San Antonio	106

'Only Lourdes can save AC Milan'

MILAN (AFP) — AC Milan President Silvio Berlusconi claims that a trip to Lourdes, rather than the return of former coach Fabio Capello, is the answer to his club's crisis.

Berlusconi, in buoyant mood during a local election rally here for his Forza Italia party, tried to defuse a crisis which worsened on Sunday night with a 3-1 defeat to Inter.

Making light of what he told the players in the dressing room at San Siro — reportedly a tongue-lashing — Berlusconi said: "Me, furious? Remember, a club president doesn't sleep, he repays."

"A club president doesn't blow his top, he expresses concern. I gave no-one a dressing down on Sunday night. I just did my duty, which was to stimulate the players."

"I reminded them that they are the champions and the strength behind AC Milan. I didn't even renew my support for Arrigo Sacchi, because there was no need to. The situation is not as dramatic as people say."

"We are still in the race for the UEFA Cup next season. All we need are the results, and a bit of luck."

"Perhaps a trip to Lourdes would sort everything out." Berlusconi also sought to play down speculation that Capello, who won Serie A titles and the European Cup in his five years here before leaving for Spain, might return next season.

Asked if he still had the final word on Capello's future, Berlusconi said: "No, that's down to Capello. He's the one that's got the contract with Real Madrid, not me."

But he added: "I don't think Capello will leave Real Madrid if he wins the Spanish title and gets a place in the European champions league next season."

Real are currently top of the Spanish League, seven points ahead of Bobby Robson's Barcelona. But the Italian press, highlighting the fact that Sacchi's Milan keep losing and Capello's Real keep winning, claim Capello and Berlusconi are to meet next week to discuss the future.

The former premier's only criticism was for the Milan fans who threw flares onto the pitch at the weekend.

"What happened was uncivilised and unworthy of a team who for the past 10 years has dominated the world and given people a great deal of satisfaction," he said.

"The Real fans are the ones who stand by the team during the difficult times."

And these are undoubtedly difficult times for Milan. For the first time since 1983-84 they have conceded more goals than they have scored (37-36), after winning only 10 of their 27 matches.

And they have already lost as many games (11) as they did in the whole of the two previous seasons combined.

Bruguera and Stich out as seeds crash in Barcelona

BARCELONA (R) — Local favourite Sergi Bruguera and former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich of Germany were the high profile casualties as the Barcelona Open lost all five seeds in action Monday.

Bruguera, a clay court specialist who has shot back up the rankings thanks to his hard court performances, went down 6-4, 2-6, 6-2 to the German Marc Kevin Goellner.

Stich fared even worse, winning only four games in a 6-2 6-2 straight sets defeat by Gilbert Schaller of Austria.

Other seeds making early exits were Swede Magnus Gustafsson, who lost to wild card Julian Alonso, and Dutchman Jan Siemerink, who went down to another unknown Spaniard, Fernando Vicente.

Norway's Christian Ruud completed the rout



Barcelona's Brazilian soccer star Ronaldo smiles as he is cheered by supporters during an exhibition tennis match on central court at the Royal Tennis Club. The show was organised at the end of the opening day of the ATP Spanish Open tennis tournament (Reuters photo)

of the fancied players by dispatching Bohdan Ulihrach of the Czech Republic 6-3 6-4.

Bruguera, a finalist in Barcelona in 1991 and 1993, has resurrected his career with fine performances in the Atlanta Olympics and, earlier this season, at key Biscayne.

But the former French Open winner showed his

lack of practice on clay after a nine-month lay-off from the surface and never looked at home on a court where he still has a large following.

The number 10 seed later risked a fine from tournament authorities after failing to appear at the post-match press conference. His father and coach, Luis, turned up instead.

"He's very affected, and doesn't want to speak to anybody," said Luis Bruguera.

Number one seed Thomas Muster of Austria begins the defence of his title on Tuesday against Italian Renzo Furlan, who needed three sets to beat Spanish qualifier Jacobo Diaz.

Squash Federation concentrates on local championships; no international tournaments on '97 agenda

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A busy schedule awaits the Jordan Squash Federation (JSF) for the upcoming season including the inaugural Jordan Clubs Championship, according to JSF President Jawdat Abdul Mun'em.

"1997 will be a special year for the federation as we have a schedule loaded with championships," Abdul Mun'em told the Jordan Times.

The highest event on the federation's agenda will be the Open Championship with local and foreign players taking part.

"This will be an excellent event for our players who will gain more experience by playing under pressure," he noted.

The JSF started the season with the championship on the occasion of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's birthday earlier this month. The Kingdom's Open Championship will be held May 15-25, and the championship on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday in November.

According to the JSF president, the national team will not take part in any international championships.

"We are trying to build a team and then face other

teams when we are ready. That is why international championships are not on our agenda," he noted.

On the other hand, the Royal Jordanian Squash team, headed by Abdul Mun'em, will participate in the 12th World Airline's Squash Championship scheduled to take place in Hamburg, Germany, May 20-25.

Jordan captured the second title last year in the 11th championship held in Amman after a convincing 5-2 win over Qantas Australia in the final match.

Jordan had won the first title in the 10th tournament in Dubai after a 5-2 win over British Airways.

Royal Jordanian is also sponsoring one of Jordan's best national team players, Mohammad Al Saeed.

"Saeed played in Malaysia and then in Geneva in the Swiss Open Championship where he was ranked 32nd," Abdul Mun'em added.

"It is a great achievement for Jordan. RJ will also send Saeed to the British Open in London," he added.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TANNAN HIRSH

East-West vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH		SOUTH	
♠ 10 5	♠ K 8 8	♠ A Q J 9 2	♠ K 6 4 3
♥ 8	♥ 8	♥ 7 6 4 3	♥ 2
♦ K Q 4 8	♦ 9 4 3 2	♦ A 8 6	♦ 10 5 4
♣ A Q J 9 2	♣ 10 7 5	♣ 7 3	♣ 7 3

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass
2♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠
Thoughtful players try to make life easy for their partners. This deal helped Allan Siebert of Little Rock, Ark., and Joe Kivell of Corona Del Mar, Calif., win the Life Master Pairs Championship at the recent Summer North American Championship by a slender margin from Floridians Bill Root and Richard

East decided that there was no reason to give West a chance to go wrong. The king of diamonds was overtaken with the ace and a diamond was returned. The defenders took two tricks — no great deal at rubber bridge, but an excellent score at duplicate.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "1"

Michael Douglas
& Val Kilmer ... in

THE GHOST AND
THE DARKNESS

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "2"

Demi Moore.... in

STRIPTease

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238
PLAZA

Eddie Murphyin

METRO

Shows: 3:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
THE HUNCHBACK OF
NOTREDAME

Show: 5:00 p.m.

CINEMA TEL:677430
CONCORD

CONCORD "1&2"

Steven Segal...in

GLIMMER MAN

Sylvester Stallone ...in

COBRA

Michael Jordan ...in

SPACE JAM

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
TEL: 625155

The play is currently being
performed in Qatar
We will be back during
Al Adha Holiday
For reservations call 625155



Thomas Muster

Muster tops ATP money-winners

MONACO (R) — Leading prize-money winners issued by the ATP Tour on Monday:

1. Thomas Muster (Austria)	\$727,254
2. Pete Sampras (U.S.)	\$723,778
3. Michael Chang (U.S.)	\$677,399
4. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia)	\$500,535
5. Todd Woodbridge (Australia)	\$372,468
6. Sergi Bruguera (Spain)	\$354,135
7. Carlos Moya (Spain)	\$331,124
8. Jonas Bjorkman (Sweden)	\$321,601
9. Jim Courier (U.S.)	\$291,910
10. Mark Woodforde (Australia)	\$254,428
11. Marc Rosset (Switzerland)	\$253,713
12. Boban Ulihrach (Czech Republic)	\$242,524
13. Tim Henman (Britain)	\$231,862
14. Thomas Enqvist (Sweden)	\$217,365
15. Javier Sanchez (Spain)	\$203,535
16. Patrick Rafter (Australia)	\$179,656
17. Richard Krajicek (Netherlands)	\$175,655
18. Mark Philippoussis (Australia)	\$174,530
19. Daniel Nestor (Canada)	\$170,546
20. Alex Corretja (Spain)	\$162,413



Martina Hingis

Hingis tops WTA rankings

STAMFORD, Connecticut (R) — Leading WTA rankings as of Monday:

1. Martina Hingis (Switzerland)	5020.5000 Points
2. Steffi Graf (Germany)	4249.5000
3. Monica Seles (U.S.)	3517.8083
4. Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)	3313.4412
5. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario (Spain)	3084.1871
6. Conchita Martinez (Spain)	2921.6710
7. Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)	2910.0667
8. Anke Huber (Germany)	2669.0388
9. Iva Majoli (Croatia)	2365.2820
10. Irina Spirlea (Romania)	1872.7950
11. Karina Habsudova (Slovakia)	1785.2182
12. Amanda Coetzer (South Africa)	1769.7009
13. Mary Joe Fernandez (U.S.)	1703.5113
14. Brenda S-Mccarthy (Netherlands)	1657.8799
15. Mary Pierce (France)	1590.8195
16. Kimberly Po (U.S.)	1452.0647
17. Judith Wiesner (Austria)	1428.5810
18. Barbara Paulus (Austria)	1406.2813
19. Elena Likhovtseva (Russia)	1272.2240
20. Ruxandra Dragomir (Romania)	1147.5000

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Rangers chase Auxerre star

PARIS (AFP) — Glasgow Rangers are reported to be chasing Auxerre's Nigerian international defender Taribo West. West, 23, has announced that he wants to leave the 1996 French champions at the end of the season, and, according to Tuesday's L'Equipe daily, Scottish champions Rangers have already contacted the player's agent. Marseille and Paris Saint-Germain are also said to be interested in signing the player, who won an Olympic gold medal with Nigeria in Atlanta last year.

McColgan to run Athens 10,000 metres

LONDON (R) — Britain's Liz McColgan, narrowly beaten in the London marathon on Sunday, said on Monday she would run the 10,000 metres rather than the marathon at the World Championships in Athens in August. The 32-year-old Scot, the 1991 world 10,000 metres champion, was beaten in a sprint finish to the London Marathon by Kenya's Joyce Chepchumba. McColgan said the hot conditions in Athens precluded a fast time in the marathon and her next race over the distance would be in either October or November. London marathon organisers said on Monday that there were 28,743 finishers inside seven hours on Sunday, the largest number ever. One male runner died during the race. The men's race was won by Portugal's Antonio Pinto who beat second-placed Stefano Baldini of Italy by two seconds.

Ince to decide this week

MILAN (AFP) — Paul Ince's plans for next season, and whether he returns to the English Premiership or stays with Inter Milan, will be decided this week, an Italian press report claimed on Tuesday. Ince has a contract here until June 1998, but the England midfielder has increasingly been linked with a return to the Premiership, and possibly a move to Arsenal. Money could be the deciding factor, according to the Gazzetta Dello Sport, and a split within the Italian club. Several top Inter officials believe Ince's market value to be around 4.5 million pounds (\$7.2 million), but club president Massimo Moratti reckons the 29-year-old former Manchester United star is worth nearer 6.5 million (\$10.4 million). If they ask the higher figure, Ince fears an English club would not have the money left to pay him a salary even close to the 900,000 pounds (\$1.44 million) a year he reportedly earns in Italy. In which case, the paper added, Ince will ask his wife Claire, who apparently wants to return to England, to stay on for another year in Italy. Under the Bosman ruling on transfer fees, Inter would not receive a penny for Ince if he stays to the end of his contract.

Becker makes winning comeback at Japan Open

TOKYO (AFP) — One forehand error forced Boris Becker into an extra set but the three-time Wimbledon champion still got off to a winning start at the Japan Open here Tuesday.

Becker beat Sebastian Lareau of Canada 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 in the second round, his first ATP match since abandoning a quarter-final match at Dubai in February with a recurrence of an injury to his right hitting wrist.

"The wrist was holding up perfectly today," said the German star. "There was no point when I had pain and even after losing the second set, my wrist was 100 per cent."

Becker picked up the injury at Wimbledon last year. The pain returned at the Australian Open, where he was beaten in the first round.

"After my comeback in the fall, I was just playing incredible tennis. I was not far away from the likes of (Pete) Sampras and (Michael) Chang."

"In fact, I was actually having good results against them and beating them. So what was especially frustrating was that after I came back that strongly, I had to make another break of two months."

"I'm just trying to find the way to come back and just to do what I like to do very much," said Becker.

At the Ariake Coliseum centre court, Becker had to save one break point in the opening game. But he got back into his rhythm soon after, notching up a 3-0 lead on his way to taking the first set.

But the aggressive Canadian converted on his only break chance for the remainder of the match at 15-40 in the seventh game forcing Becker to fire a passing shot long to go up 4-3, and squared the contest at one set all.



Boris Becker

Becker, however, stood firm in his service games in the decider and never gave another chance to the world 109 from Canada.

"I felt it was a very good start after being away for so long. I just hope that I'm going to stay healthy."

I hope I can build on that and just produce a period of over four or five weeks with good results. Then I'll be fine," added Becker.

His third-round opponent will be either Jean-Philippe Fleurian or 16th-seeded Lionel Roux.

Roux, who crashed to eventual champion Sampras in the second round last year here, outgunned David Adams 6-1, 6-4 to set up an all-French meeting earlier in the day. Fleurian defeated American Jim Grabb on Monday.

MAJOR LEAGUE RESULTS

NEW YORK (R) — Results of Major League baseball games played on Monday:

American League

Boston	10	Oakland	1
Seattle	6	Cleveland	1
Milwaukee	7	Detroit	0
Baltimore	4	Minnesota	2
Anaheim	5	NY Yankees	1
Kansas City	3	Toronto	2
Texas	3	White Sox	1

National League

Houston	4	St. Louis	2 (In 10)
Colorado	10	Montreal	8
Atlanta	15	Cincinnati	5
San Francisco	3	NY Mets	2

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Doctors in Surif village blame three deaths on Israeli curfew

SURIF (AP) — Doctors and residents in this Palestinian village blamed a stringent 26-day Israeli army curfew for three deaths, saying troops have barred critically ill patients from reaching hospitals.

The dead include a stillborn infant, an 80-year-old woman who inhaled tear gas fired by troops during clashes, and a 64-year-old man with breathing difficulties.

The army said soldiers at roadblocks ringing the village have orders to let medical emergencies pass, and denied there was a link between the army restrictions and the three deaths.

Surif, a village of 15,000, has been under curfew since March 21 when a Surif resident and member of the military wing of Hamas detonated a bomb in a Tel Aviv cafe, killing himself and three Israeli women. The Shin Bet security service later uncovered a Hamas cell in Surif that had killed a total of 11 Israelis.

In Surif, some residents warned Monday that Israel's tough stance would win Hamas more supporters. "We will all be Hamas if this situation continues," said labourer Razi Salak, 45.

But others blamed Hamas for their ordeal. "I am against killing civilians. I want to earn a living," said Sharif Arar, 47, a father of 12 who lost his construction job in Israel two years ago due to prolonged security closures.

The three deaths have embittered the villagers.

Mohammed Kadi, 61, said his 80-year-old mother, Rakiyah, was sitting on her porch last Friday, at a time when Israeli troops fired tear gas to disperse riots. Four canisters fell near the porch and his mother collapsed, Kadi said.

Kadi said he tried to take his mother to Ahli Hospital in Hebron, a 20-minute ride away, but was turned away at an Israeli army checkpoint, one of several ringing the village. Kadi tried a back road, but his mother died on the way.

In another case, Afrikia Abu Reis, nine months pregnant, called a Hebron maternity clinic on April 7, a Monday, after she couldn't feel the baby moving. Doctors told her to come in immediately, but Abu Reis said soldiers at the checkpoint would not let her pass.

Three days later, she called again, and a hospital ambulance took her out of the village through back roads. Dr. Abdul Raouf Shabaneh found the baby had died in the womb. "If she had arrived on Monday, we could have saved the baby," he said.

In the third case, Khaled Arar, 64, collapsed Monday morning with breathing difficulties. Village doctor Ibrahim Hor, said it took him 30 minutes to get to the patient because he was at the time treating others who had inhaled tear gas. A second village doctor has been jailed by Israel on suspicion of Hamas membership.

When Dr. Hor reached the Arar home, he put the patient in his car and drove to the Israeli army checkpoint. "We argued for 15 minutes with the soldiers. When the patient continued vomiting, our driver just broke through the roadblock," Dr. Hor said.

Arar died on the way to Ahli Hospital in Hebron. "There were enough delays to kill the patient," said Dr. Hor.

However, a doctor at Ahli Hospital said the patient, who had food in his lungs, would have required emergency treatment in the village, something for which the doctor said he lacked equipment.

When about 200 mourners gathered outside the Arar home Monday, soldiers fired three tear gas canisters to disperse them.

Israeli government spokesman Moshe Fogel said the army investigated Palestinian claims, and that in the past, soldiers have been prosecuted for making improper judgments.

"In this case, the initial inquiry showed no such improper behavior was involved," he said. "I don't think we can be blamed for every death in the village."

Israeli police advise charging minister, top aide

TEL AVIV (AP) — Police recommended prosecuting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's top aide and his Justice Minister for their involvement in an influence-trading scandal, Israel's Channel 2 TV said Tuesday.

There was no police recommendation concerning Mr. Netanyahu himself, who was questioned by police and initially warned that he could face charges in the case.

The decision whether to pursue the police recommendations in court is now up to the state prosecutor, Edna Arbel.

The 12-week investigation looked into allegations that Mr. Netanyahu's appointment of a little-known attorney general was part of a deal to win favourable treatment for a political ally, Ariele Deri, who later faced trial on corruption charges.

Police recommended bribery charges be filed against Mr. Deri, the leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party which is a member of the ruling coalition.

Justice Minister Tzachi Hanegbi appointed his friend and mentor Roni Bar-On as the attorney general, but Mr. Bar-On resigned a day later after a controversy arose over his qualifications. Police recommended that Mr. Hanegbi be charged with fraud and breach of trust.

Channel 2 said Avigdor Lieberman, Mr. Netanyahu's top political aide, acted as a conduit in negotiations between Mr. Deri and Mr. Netanyahu over the Bar-On appointment. Police recommended that Lieberman be charged with breach of public trust.

Mr. Netanyahu has denied he knew anything about a deal, as did Mr. Deri. Mr. Hanegbi, Mr. Lieberman and Mr. Bar-On.

On Monday, Mr. Lieberman was questioned by police for seven hours before they wrapped up the investigation.

A police announcement said the chief investigator, Sando Mazor, gave Ms. Arbel a 995-page report of police findings in the probe.

"According to the wishes of the prosecutor's office, police have decided not to publish their findings or recommendations," the announcement said, adding the decision on what to make public lay with the prosecutors.



HEBRON SETTLERS: An Israeli soldier grabs a Jewish settler by the collar and shoves him off a rooftop as security forces stop settlers from throwing stones at Palestinians shopping in the Arab market below on Tuesday. Settlers threw dozens of stones from their heavily guarded enclave in the centre of town claiming that Palestinians threw stones at their homes (Reuters photo)

Rafsanjani, Europeans move to ease tensions

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran moved Tuesday to ease a crisis with the European Union after five days of angry protests over a German court ruling that implicates the Iranian government in terrorism.

President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, in an apparent bid to shift the blame away from Bonn, accused the "Zionists" of orchestrating the verdict linking Iranian leaders with the 1992 murder of four Kurdish dissidents.

"The Germans have fallen into a trap set up by the Zionists, who are opposed to the century-old friendship between Iran and Germany," he said in reference to Israel, quoted by the official IRNA news agency.

The daily Iran News, close to the Foreign Ministry, ran the headline: "Optimism over Iran-EU crisis." It predicted that "business with Europe will resume once the dust has settled."

The English-language daily published conciliatory remarks from European officials, notably German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel who has cautioned

that breaking off ties with Iran would be a "mistake."

And the Foreign Ministry Director General, Mahmud Mussavi, speaking to the Iran News, said he was confident that European ambassadors "will return without much noise."

EU countries, with the exception of Greece, recalled their ambassadors in reaction to last Thursday's Berlin court ruling and suspended their five-year-old "critical dialogue" with Tehran.

Even the headline newspaper Jomhuri Islami tried to spare Germany, saying the Berlin "travesty" had been directed by Washington and the Jewish state.

"The Germans did not live up to their great responsibility and allowed the United States and the Zionists to take over the scandalous show," it complained.

Parliament speaker Ali Akbar Nategh Nuri pledged on Tuesday to protect foreigners living here after radical students tried to storm the German embassy to protest the terrorism charges.

"The lives of foreign nationals are completely

protected and there is no problem with security," he said.

"Our government is duty-bound to protect foreign lives like they were its own people. We will not let international regulations be violated," said Mr. Nategh Nuri, who is a favourite to succeed Mr. Rafsanjani as president in May 23 elections.

"The Germans have lost credibility with Iran, other European countries better not make a similar mistake, or they are in for a big loss," warned Mr. Nategh Nuri.

A large Iranian trade delegation has cancelled a planned visit to Germany in the wake of the Berlin court ruling implicating the Iranian government in state terrorism, trade officials said on Tuesday.

The Iranian embassy in Bonn informed the chamber of commerce on Tuesday morning that the visit was "not possible for the moment" and "asked for it to be put back," a spokesman for the chamber of commerce, Philipp Von Walderdorff, told AFP.

No new date has been fixed, he added.

Russia, NATO leaders discuss future relations

Greece changes its position on NATO and WEU accord, gives Turkey a break

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov met North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary General Javier Solana Tuesday for another round of talks about future relations between Moscow and the Western alliance after it expands eastwards.

Both sides have pre-empted the talks with heated rhetoric aimed at winning more concessions in talks on a deal aimed at saving Moscow's face and ruling out new conflict in Europe.

"They are hoping for a breakthrough which will enable them to sign an accord laying out the terms for peaceful coexistence into the next century. But both look unhappy about the current state of negotiations."

"The main problem of minimising harm for Russia from NATO's enlargement has not been solved yet," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov as saying. Mr. Mamedov recently held talks in Washington.

The main sticking point is Russia's fear that the alliance's plans to invite in former Soviet bloc countries in July will lead to a military build-up near its borders.

"So far NATO has not changed enough so that we would not feel a threat if the alliance's military structures near our borders," Mr. Mamedov said.

Russia is also demanding a say in some NATO decision-making under the accord, which it hopes to sign in six weeks.

But Russian officials say the two sides, anxious to avoid potentially damaging point-scoring, have agreed to keep the details of the talks under wraps.

"The main thing is to reach a result, not to tell the world who did what to bring about the success," Interfax quoted a Russian Foreign Ministry source as saying.

On the eve of the talks, both NATO and the Kremlin appeared prepared to dig in

their heels rather than give any more ground.

Some NATO members "are not showing enough desire to seek a compromise," said Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky, who this month took on extra responsibilities for coordinating foreign policy in the Kremlin.

"Such an agreement must be reached on an equal basis, but not at all costs," Mr. Yastrzhembsky told Interfax News Agency.

Greece drops opposition to NATO-WEU cooperation

Greece Tuesday dropped its opposition to a cooperation accord between NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) that will give Turkey a say in WEU operations involving the alliance, a WEU source said here.

Under the agreement between the 10-member Euro-Atlantic defence body and the Atlantic alliance, associate members of the WEU will be able to participate on the same basis as full members in WEU operations using NATO resources, the source said.

Athens, which is a full member of both NATO and the WEU, had wanted to prevent its arch-rival Turkey from having a say in operations of the WEU, of which Turkey is an associate member along with Norway and Iceland.

Greece had dragged its feet on the issue for nearly a month, exasperating its partners in both NATO and the WEU.

Diplomats said Greece tried to make its approval conditional on being allowed to join the combined army and naval units, Euroforce and Euromarforce, but their component countries — France, Italy, Portugal and Spain — categorically rebuffed the bid.

protected and there is no problem with security," he said.

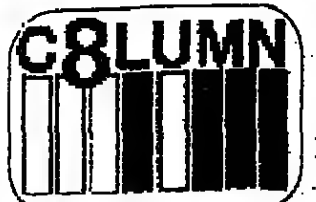
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Celebrities seek to raise awareness of film preservation

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. film director Martin Scorsese, actress Lauren Bacall and pop singer Carly Simon were among the stars Monday at an event in New York to plug American Movie Classics' (AMC) "film preservation festival" set for October. AMC, a cable television channel specialising in films from the 1930s through the 1970s, said the festival, with its "film noir" theme, will raise money for movie preservation. The three-day event is co-sponsored by the film foundation, a group founded by Scorsese that distributes funds raised by AMC to archives such as the Library of Congress motion picture division.

No sex for Bologna footballers

FLORENCE (AFP) — Bologna football coach Renzo Ulivieri has told his men to lay off sex this week because of Saturday's big match with Italian league leaders Juventus. Ulivieri wants nothing to come between Bologna and their bid for a place in the UEFA cup next season. "I've asked my players to prepare for the match against Juventus like true professionals. That means going to bed early and keeping any sexual activity to a minimum," he said, without giving details. "I'm not asking them anything extraordinary, and I've got faith in my men." Juventus was beaten 3-0 by 10-man Udinese last Sunday, but Ulivieri knows that even a week of celibacy for Bologna may not be enough to swing Saturday's match their way.

Cyprus lions seek home away from the wildlife

NICOSIA (R) — Wanted: good homes for seven lions, too tame to return to the wild. Officials at Cyprus's Limassol Zoo on Monday said the resident family of felines had become too large for the facilities available. "There are 11 lions and we are willing to give away seven," said Lambros Lambrou, director of the zoo run by the local town council in Limassol, a sprawling port city on Cyprus's southern coast.

"We are not trying to get rid of them, we want to ensure that they go somewhere where they will survive," he told Reuters. However, no other zoo in the region has responded to the offer. And it is unlikely that the lions, nine of them born in captivity in Cyprus, could be returned to the wild because they are too tame.

Russian elite to celebrate variety pop queen's 48th birthday

MOSCOW (AFP) — Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and other big names will turn out Tuesday to celebrate the 48th birthday of Alla Pugachova, a national pop phenomenon who idolises Lenin. She will be feted with a nationally televised "surprise" for Alla Pugachova party attended by Chernomyrdin, First Deputy Premier Boris Nemtsov and Anatoly Chubais, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, and President Boris Yeltsin's daughter Tatyana Dyachenko. A fixture on the glitzy stages of Russia's variety shows, singing hits like "a million purple roses," Pugachova says she "often addresses Lenin," the founder of the Soviet Union.

Shiite leader killed in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — A prominent Shiite Muslim leader was gunned down along with his security guard in central Pakistan's Okara city overnight in a suspected sectarian murder, police said Tuesday.

Hassan Hadi, who was a medical doctor by profession, was returning home after closing his clinic late Monday when unidentified assailants riding on a motorbike sprayed bullets near his residence.

The guard, who was a police constable provided by the local administration, died on the spot. Dr. Hadi in a bid to escape fled into his neighbour's house but the assailants followed him and shot him dead, police said.

A young boy inside the house was also wounded along with three goats kept there for slaughtering on religious Muslim festival Eid Al Adha due Friday, witnesses reported.

The assailants fled, police said, suspecting sectarian rivalry in the attack.

Dr. Hadi, who was a child specialist, was a well respected figure of Okara, 380 kilometres east of here, residents said. He was also running a welfare organization for the minority Shiite community.

A leader of Shiite political party Tehreek-i-Jafaria Pakistan (TJP) died in similar shooting in Okara last month.

Earlier three worshippers were gunned down in March when unidentified gunmen opened fire on a mosque belonging to a Sunni extremist group Sipah-i-Ahbab Pakistan (SSP) in the Punjab city of Faisalabad.

Pakistani police in a crackdown on suspected militants last month detained hundreds of activists belonging to the two communities.

U.S. fails to condemn Iraq for pilgrim flight

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — A U.S. drive to get U.N. condemnation of Iraq for allegedly violating the air embargo faltered Monday after the Security Council again failed to agree on the wording of a statement.

The 15-member council ended formal discussions on whether to fault Baghdad for the flight Wednesday by an Iraqi Airways plane to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, without adopting a position. Diplomats said behind-the-scenes diplomacy would be at play for the remainder of the day to determine whether a common response could be forged.

If not, U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson may present a U.S.-sponsored resolution stating that Iraq violated U.N. resolutions by failing to obtain permission from the U.N. sanctions committee to make the flight, diplomats said.

China and Russia have steadfastly disagreed with the U.S. view that the Iraqi flight was in violation of U.N. resolution 670 that set up the air embargo in September 1990 following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the previous month.

They have sided with Iraq, which maintains that the flight served a humanitarian purpose and was allowed under the ambiguously worded text of the resolution.

The United States last week triggered the campaign to obtain Security Council condemnation of the Iraqi flight but after four days of discussion, a consensus on a statement failed to materialise.

In a statement released here, Iraq's mission to the United Nations reiterated that the "U.S. position on this matter is illegal, tendentious and arbitrary."

"We appeal to the members of the Security Council to reject any new interpretations of the resolutions," the statement from the Iraqi mission said.

Under a draft text under scrutiny Friday, the Security Council was to have expressed its "concern" that an Iraqi aircraft flew from Baghdad to Jeddah and urge nations to "prevent the over-flight of their territory of aircraft destined to land in Iraq."

But that version did not rally member-states and a watered-down text failed to meet with U.S. approval, diplomats said.

Iraq has invested much diplomatic effort to prevent the Security Council from criticising the flight. Baghdad also made it clear over the weekend that it considered the stalemate a victory.

"After its failure Washington finds itself isolated as the international community shows understanding of Iraq's attitude," the Iraqi government daily Al Jomhuriya printed Saturday.

Iraq has been under a regime of crippling sanctions since its invasion of Kuwait which was rolled back during the 1991 Gulf

Turkey's Ciller supports anti-Islamist campaign; Kurdish detainees released

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller, told governors to enforce secularist laws as part of curbs on Islamist activism demanded by the military, Anatolian News Agency said.

"I want to personally give you an order to end certain abuses in our country and carefully carry out the laws as dealt with by the National Security Council," the news agency quoted her late on Monday as telling a meeting of dozens of provincial governors.

The military-dominated council in February called on Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's coalition government to stamp out the growing influence of Islam in public life.

The army's demands have upset the coalition's balance between Islamist Erbakan's wing and secularists of Ms.

Ciller's True Path Party. Several True Path ministers have publicly criticised the Islamists' reluctance to toe the generals' line.

Ms. Ciller told the governors, who have wide security powers, to uphold laws. "I want you... not to forget that fundamentalism is an important problem," she said.

Her warning follows a directive to governors from the Interior Minister, also from Ms. Ciller's party, to enforce anti-Islamist measures.

The army has called for strict adherence to decades-old bans on Islamic sects and the prohibition of government workers wearing Islamic dress.

A Turkish state security court Monday ordered the release of 13 leaders of the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP) who have been in jail since

last June, a party official said.

"Party leader Murat Bozlak and 12 other party administrators were released at the end of today's hearing," HADEP official and former MP Sirri Sakik told AFP.

"This is a delayed but positive step towards internal peace and we are happy about this," Mr. Sakik said.

Mr. Bozlak and the other party leaders were arrested at the end of a party congress here on June 23 last year, which became the scene of the desecration of the Turkish flag by a Kurdish youth.

The trial of the Kurdish youth, who is still under arrest, and the released HADEP leaders will continue in May, Mr. Sakik said.

"But the release of the party officials might be an indication that they will be acquitted," he added.